MEMOIRS

OF

MARY,

A

NOVEL.

By Mrs. GUNNING.

IN FIVE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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MEMOIRS

OF

M A R Y.

Miſs Montague's Journal continued.

Jan. 22.—*Morning.*

WHEN I got to my own room laſt night, I ſat down, as is my cuſtom, to add a few lines to my journal, but it was ſo late before the company ſeparated, my eyes were ſo heavy, and my bed looked ſo invitingly, that indolence got the better of inclination, and I reſigned my paper to

the port-folio, my pen to the ſtandiſh, and my head to the pillow, confiding to the ſtrength of my memory till this morning for the events of yeſterday.

Juſt as we were going to the Opera, a ſealed note was brought to the Ducheſs—From Lord Auberry, ſaid ſhe, haſtily running over the contents, and then throwing it on the table—he is going out of town, and cannot come to me on either of my nights.—Heaven be praiſed! I ſoftly whiſpered, not conſcious that there was any body who could poſſibly over-hear me, when a voice immediately anſwered from behind me—How graceful is the homage of praiſe from the divine lips of Miſs Montague! I looked ſuddenly round, and who ſhould be ſtanding at the back of my chair but Mr Lexington?—I thought I ſhould have died with confuſion; it was not like his uſual politeneſs to ſurpriſe one in ſuch a manner; I did not tell him he had made me angry, but he has great penetration, and I believe he found it out, for he often looked

looked at me as if he was aſking my pardon, and was not in ſpirits again the whole night.

My ſecond excurſion to the Opera was more pleaſant than the firſt; I ſaw nothing of the two ladies who ſtared at me ſo confidently the laſt time I was there. We had Sir Aſhton Montague in our box; I thought him a great deal more agreeable than when he dined with us; he was quite as lively as any one of the party, talked very much to me, and did not talk to me of Lord Auberry, which made me liſten to and anſwer him without embarraſſment;—but if ever I ſaw Lord Auberry in my life, I ſaw him this evening. I obſerved my relation and name-ſake often look towards a particular corner in the upper boxes; there is a ſympathy in eyes, I believe, becauſe our own mechanically follow the lead of others; I can aſſign no other cauſe why I ſhould turn my head the ſame way, as if to ſearch out the object that attracted him; I had no motive for doing ſo, but a

ſtrong reaſon why I did not repeat my folly, for on looking up, I ſaw Lord Auberry, and he ſaw me, for he drew back immediately, and yet, from what paſſed afterwards, I can hardly credit my ſenſes. The Ducheſs, who heard Sir Aſhton the other day, when he dined in Groſvenor-ſquare, talk to me of Lord Auberry, ſuppoſed they muſt be friends, and aſked Sir Aſhton, what in the name of abſurdity could carry his Lordſhip out of town, when all the world were crowding into it?—then added, pray tell him, if you pleaſe, that neither Miſs Montague or I are ſatisfied with his written excuſes, and ſhall not be friends with him till he makes them to us in perſon.

What were my feelings! I cannot deſcribe them;—however, I had preſence of mind enough to requeſt Sir Aſhton, that when he delivered her Grace's meſſage, he would have the goodneſs to leave my name out of it, for that I really had neither ſo much impatience or curioſity to ſee his

Lordſhip

Lordſhip, as would juſtify my expreſſing any diſpleaſure towards him.

Aye, replied her Grace, you do not know this couſin of your's, Sir Aſhton, ſhe is the verieſt little prude in nature; and would, I am ſure, live altogether without the ſociety of mankind, rather than ſend to invite them.

He ſaid ſomething very obliging in my favour, to which ſhe anſwered, Yes, yes, the heart is right, it is only the education that has been wrong;—her Grace then aſked more queſtions about Lord Auberry, particularly when he meant to leave London, and when to come back to it.

After having ſeen him the moment before, the reply he made her aſtoniſhed me, for he ſaid Lord Auberry had left Town that morning, and had fixed no time for his return!—have I or have I not ſeen him? that is the queſtion.

Dreſſing Time.

Would you believe it poſſible? there are no leſs than ſixteen cards of invitations come in this morning; five for balls, one a maſquerade, and the reſt aſſemblies;—they are all for very diſtant days, and I ſhall ſay nothing more about them in this place.

We have been at two auctions, made three viſits, and drove through both Parks ſince breakfaſt;—the Ducheſs is in high good humour, ſpeaks handſomely of Lady Jane, longs to ſee Miſs Forteſcue, who, Mr. Lexington has told her, is very handſome, praiſes Miſs Beaulieu, finds fault with Mrs. Oxburn, ridicules Lady Elizabeth, laughs at Mrs. Tovee, and ſays I am a charming creature.

From

From my own Fire-ſide.—
Two in the Morning.

Do you not tremble, dear grand-mamma, for the health and morals of your Mary, when you look on the laſt of my dates, from day to day, and conſider how different are the preſent hours to thoſe I uſed to keep at Riverſdale? and yet I hope there is no real cauſe for your apprehenſions on either of theſe ſcores, whilſt my colour remains unfaded, my appetite unfailing, and my ſleep unbroken;—and whilſt I continue to ſay, when ſurrounded with objects the moſt brilliant, and the moſt ſeducing, "I would renounce ye all, and for ever, for ſober happineſs, and the preſence of a beloved parent," I ſhall not fear a decline of conſtitution or principles.

I have not paſſed ſo pleaſant a day as this has been ſince, I firſt landed on the

iſland of vanity;—of all our uſual dinner party, there has dined with us only Mr. Lexington and his two ſiſters; Lady Jane Petworth, the two young ladies of her family, the Ducheſs of Northington, who arrived in town laſt night, and her daughter Lady Araminta Boice, completed the agreeable circle;—our two Ducheſſes, that is to ſay, my Ducheſs, and her Grace of Northington, have been intimate from childhood, and are ſeldom aſunder during the months of diſſipation.—I was introduced to theſe ſtrangers under ſo fortunate a patronage, that they have both done me the honor to aſſure me of their friendſhip.—The Ducheſs of Northington has a round, open, good-humoured countenance, ſeldom ſpeaks without laughing, and never laughs without being accompanied;—ſhe is a promoter of every thing that is called pleaſure, and had rather you ſhould love her as the parent of mirth, than pay her homage as the wife of a Duke;—Lady Araminta is unlike her

mother

mother in every thing, yet I think her equally agreeable, and admire them both exceedingly.

In the evening our numbers were reinforced by the dropping in of Mrs. Oxburn and a train of gentlemen in her ſuite, whom ſhe had brought with her from the play;—her Grace of Northington propoſed that all the company under fifty years of age ſhould dance, whilſt thoſe above it might draw their amuſement from the board of green cloth.—Fiddlers were enquired for amongſt the ſervants, but not finding any, ſhe ſent away for two of her own, and in twenty minutes we were ſummoned to an adjoining room by the cheerful ſound, not only of a violin, but pipe and tabor;—the gentlemen ſtarted from their chairs, and each of them aſking the lady who ſat next to him if ſhe was under fifty, led her off as his partner;—my neareſt neighbour happened to be Mr. Lexington, who, taking my hand, ſaid he would not trouble me with enquiries, he was no enemy to

age, had in ſome caſes a predilection in its favor—and, if I had arrived to the honors of a hundred, I ſhould ſtill be the object of his election.

Juſt as we reached the door of the room to which we were all crowding as faſt as we could, with each a partner at her ſide, except only Mrs. Oxburn, Lord Silveſter was announced, and, tranſported at the ſound of a fiddle, flew to me, bleſſing himſelf, that he came in time to claim the performance of my promiſe.

What promiſe? ſternly demanded my conductor.

Oh! you pretend to forget, Lexington, that I am to have the ſupreme felicity of Miſs Montague's hand the two firſt dances, when and wherever we ſhould meet on ſuch an occaſion as this.

There can be no pretence, my Lord, when Miſs Montague is the ſubject of contention;—I have not forgot that you aſked her for the firſt ball, but this is an accidental affair, and, in the abſence of your

your Lordſhip, I have taken the very great liberty, without conſulting you, to aſk and obtain that honor for myſelf; which, if Lord Silveſter is inclined to diſpute, it muſt be when I am leſs agreeably engaged than at preſent. He then led me to my place in the ſet, which was already arranged, and I had ſoon the ſatisfaction of ſeeing it augmented by Mrs. Oxburn and his Lordſhip, who did not ſeem abundantly pleaſed with each other; her predilection for my partner has been pretty clearly evinced before this evening,—and, the firſt dances being over, ſhe made the bold propoſal of herſelf for the two ſecond, and Lord Silveſter again made his demands on me with more ſucceſs than before.—This is enough ſcribbling for one ſitting.

Jan. 23.

I have paſſed the whole of this day, if not ſo gaily as yeſterday, yet infinitely more to my ſatisfaction; Lady Jane Petworth has ſuch a fund of wiſdom, ſo much the power of entertaining,—ſhe is ſo pious, ſo gentle, ſo condeſcending, ſo like in every thing to the deareſt and moſt revered of parents, that whenever I am with her I am no longer abſent from you.

She aſked the Ducheſs laſt night if ſhe might call for me, as ſhe did laſt Sunday; and receiving a gracious aſſent, went one ſtep further; it was for leave to keep me with her to dinner; adding, ſhe would herſelf ſet me down in Groſvenor-ſquare, after an early ſupper:—this alſo was granted, and the more readily, as ſhe was going out with her newly arrived friend the Ducheſs of Northington, to ſeveral aſſemblies, where I could be of no uſe to her.

De-

Delighted not to receive one negative to her ſeveral petitions, and determined to have enough of me, the dear woman came herſelf to fetch me before ſhe had breakfaſted, and before the young ladies were ready to attend her.—Oh! how I long to repoſe all my thoughts in her boſom!—I was twenty times going to ſpeak to her of Lord Auberry, but the ſhortneſs of our drive, or ſomething elſe, deterred me; for well as I love Miſs Beaulieu, I could not truſt any body in the world but Lady Jane with the ſlights and inſults he has thought fit to mark me with, after the moſt ſolemn proteſtations made in your preſence, and ſanctioned by your acceptance; I wonder if I ſhall ever have courage to tell Lady Jane, when I get her quite alone;—it is not that I am afraid ſhe will reprove me, as you have not condemned me,—of ſelf reproaches I have none, and will moſt certainly avoid them; —but then it is ſo odd to be one's own hiſtorian, ſo humiliating for a young creature like me to have already encountered events

events far from being common ones,—theſe events ſtill ſo perfectly unaccountable to myſelf, that I do not know how to ſet about repoſing my confidence even with Lady Jane.—I have done with Lord Auberry;—yet what a myſtery does he ſtill preſerve!—how unreaſonable is his conduct!—he diſguiſes himſelf to prevent my knowing his perſon, yet tells me in his own undiſguiſed voice, that he has claims on me which he never will renounce!—Dear grand-mamma, has this inconſiſtent man claims on your Mary?—No! he has no claims; if you once permitted me to think he had, he has ſince that time forfeited them for ever.

In our way to Bruton-ſtreet, Lady Jane told me a few of her moſt intimate friends would dine with her, who longed to ſee me; they all viſit, added ſhe, in Groſvenor-ſquare, but not in that eaſy way in which the Ducheſs of Cleveland's particular favorites are admitted; half-a-dozen names left at the door in the courſe of a winter,

and

and as many returned by her Grace, keeps up the acquaintance; they ſeldom go to her aſſemblies,—but after ſeeing you, I ſhall be miſtaken if you have not ſome of them to entertain to-morrow evening.

One of theſe ladies of whom I am ſpeaking, continued Lady Jane, is the dowager of an Earl, the other is the wife of a Viſcount.

Lady Felton has been a widow twenty years, yet is neither old or ugly. She has two ſons, whom ſhe conſiders as her friends, her lovers, and her huſbands,—and they make her large returns of confidence, duty, and affection.

Lady Buſby is a very fine lady, and at the ſame time a very worthy woman; ſhe miſſes few occaſions of ſeeing and being ſeen; is the moſt ſhowy and expenſive in her entertainments of any body I know. Her lord has an equal paſſion for magnificence, and a princely fortune to ſupport it;—but if their rage for grandeur is bounded only by prudence, I muſt

alſo declare, their liberality and charity have no bounds at all. Lady Buſby is ſtill more remarkable on another account: ſhe would wiſh to live in habits of friendſhip with all the world—but then it muſt be a new creation; no woman, married or ſingle, whoſe reputation is not as immaculate as her own, would ever be found in her circle, if ſhe could deviſe any method to keep them out of it:—As it is, they do not come by her invitation, but contrive to get in by the intereſt of others, who are more proper than themſelves, and leſs exact than Lady Buſby. For this reaſon, ſhe will never go farther than appearances with any family where ſhe is liable to mix, and that very frequently, with faſhionable ladies of a certain deſcription, who may either force themſelves or be forced upon her acquaintance.—She has four daughters; only two of them are yet come out, and I cannot ſay I know quite as much of them as I do of their mother.

After

After we came from church, Lady Jane was ſet down at home, and left Miſs Beaulieu, Miſs Forteſcue, and myſelf, to do as we pleaſed with our time till four o'clock, and would then expect our aſſiſtance to receive and entertain her dinner company.

When I was in the Park laſt Sunday, from the throng of coaches ſauntering down the drive, impeding the paſſage, and hitching in the wheels of each other, it ſtruck me, that certainly the air of Hyde-Park muſt be the pureſt and moſt ſalutary of any other in the world;—or why would ſuch numbers, many of whom I obſerved were invalids, run the riſk of frights and overturns at every ſtep, merely to imbibe it?—I therefore named the Park, when my two companions obligingly put themſelves under my direction.

About the middle of Piccadilly, there paſſed by, as ſwift as thought, in a phaëton drawn, or rather whirled, by four ſmall horſes, Lord Auberry and Sir Aſhton Montague. They did not know Lady

Jane's

Jane's liveries, or, I dare ſay, we ſhould not have eſcaped their obſervation, as curioſity to look at the pretty equipage had made me drop the ſide-glaſs, and extend my neck even beyond it; but on ſeeing who it was, I drew back, and reſigned my ſtation to the other ladies, who were as eager as myſelf to catch a glimpſe of it in its flight.

And this is his going out of town! How degrading is falſehood! How ſhocking a vice is duplicity!—Lord Auberry himſelf only could have taken the bandage from my eyes, and I ſhall thank him as long as I live for doing me ſo great a ſervice. I bluſh for Sir Aſhton Montague:—I am ſhocked that a man, who bears the name of my father, ſhould condeſcend to propogate untruths, either to ſave himſelf, or ſerve his friend;—there is no poſſible excuſe for a breach of veracity.

I believe they went out at the turnpike, for we ſaw nothing of them in the Park—indeed we were ſo early, that there was not another

another carriage there but our own, which made us agree to extend our drive; and at our return it was ſo crowded, that I thought we never ſhould get into the ſtreets again. Thus ends my morning adventures.

Lady Jane's friends exactly anſwered the deſcription ſhe had given me of them, in our way from Groſvenor-ſquare, only that I did not expect to find, after twenty years of widowhood, the appearance of youth, and a conſiderable ſhare of beauty, in the countenance of Lady Felton—and ſhould certainly have miſtaken her for one of Lady Buſby's grown-up daughters, had I not been preſented to her before I was introduced to the other family. I can tell you that I love Miſs Beaulieu—that I admire Miſs Forteſcue; but I cannot tell you how I like the Miſs Buſbies, or whether I like them at all.

Lord Felton is about ſeven-and-twenty—his brother, Mr. Arnold, not more than twenty-two; the former has a ſedateneſs in

in his manner, bordering on melancholy—he does not ſpeak much, but appears very gentle, very good humoured, exceedingly fond of his mother, and attentive to every body. I fancy there is a very good underſtanding between him and the elder Miſs Buſby—indeed I did not make the diſcovery by any particular marks of attachment on his part, but had ſeveral hints of it from the lady herſelf, who took ſome pains to get me into a corner, to know my opinion of his Lordſhip; and, at the ſame time, gave me reaſon to believe ſhe was more than commonly intereſted in the enquiries—and that with the approbation of both their families. I own I was rather ſurpriſed at this proof of confidence on ſo ſhort an acquaintance—but I ſuppoſe it is the faſhion.

Mr. Arnold is much more lively, and, I dare ſay, ninety out of a hundred would call him more agreeable than his brother; but I do not think he is one half ſo intereſting.

reſting. The Counteſs and Viſcounteſs were exceedingly good to me—and honoured me with ſeveral diſtinguiſhing marks of their approbation. I am to ſee them to-morrow, at the Ducheſs of Cleveland's aſſembly—the next night we are all to meet again at Lady Elderton's—and the day following Miſs Beaulieu will be on her road to Riverſdale, carrying with her the thoughts, the wiſhes, the very heart of your Mary, which ſhe will lay at your feet;—how much rather would I, in perſon, convey them to you!

I have yet a little more to add, before I cloſe my account of this day—and ſhall continue to lengthen my journal to the laſt moment. I am to ſeal it up on Tueſday night, and to leave it with Jenny, who is to deliver it to Miſs Beaulieu's ſervant, when ſhe ſends for it on Wedneſday morning, which will, probably, be before my eyes are open.

After we had dined, Lord Felton and Mr. Arnold excuſed themſeves to Lady

Jane for an hour, in conſequence of a note, brought to them whilſt they were at table. It had been left at their houſe, and was from an old college acquaintance, his Lordſhip ſaid, who was paſſing through London, and deſired, if it were poſſible, he might ſee them before eight o'clock—as by that time he ſhould be again on his journey.

As ſoon as they had obtained her Ladyſhip's permiſſion, and aſſured her, with ſome oblique compliments, which ſeemed general, but which, I fancy, were really intended only for the Miſs Buſbies, that their abſence would not be a long one, we all adjourned into the drawing-room.

Lady Jane, who knows how much I exult, and what conſequential joy it gives me, when you are made the ſubject of converſation, began ſpeaking of Miſs Beaulieu's intended excurſion to Riverſdale. Oh! what encomiums follow the name of Lady Auberry! and how proud is your Mary, when ſhe ſays, Am not I the grand-

grand-daughter, the beloved grand-daughter of this exalted Lady Auberry? the delightful topic led to another, that was far, very far, from giving me ſelf-importance, or matter of ſelf-congratulation.

Ah! ſaid Lady Buſby, I do not expect the world will ever meet with a ſecond Counteſs of Auberry like your grandmother, Miſs Montague! I dare ſay, when the preſent Earl marries, it will be to ſome woman or other as diſſipated and as good for nothing as himſelf; but perhaps I am delivering my ſentiments too freely—if ſo, you will have good-nature enough to pardon me—for though I know he muſt be your relation, however diſtant, yet I think he cannot have the honour of your acquaintance, becauſe it is no ſecret that the preſent and late family are not, or ever have been, well together. I know his mother and ſiſter, and can venture to ſay, the good opinion of Mrs. and Miſs Pleydell would not be an acquiſition to any body. Nothing can be ſo obſcure as her birth, except

cept the meanneſs and low cunning of her conduct; ſhe is the only perſon who ever ſpoke of Lady Auberry without veneration, and ſhe is never tired of abuſing her; if ſuch a circumſtance was poſſible to happen, ſhe would always find a ſtrong reinforcement in the talents of her daughter.

I replied, I had never ſeen either of them; and after what her Ladyſhip condeſcended to inform me of, I would go an hundred miles to avoid them. Lady Jane then aſked me, If I was as much a ſtranger to Lord Auberry as to his mother and ſiſter? I ſaid, No—on the contrary, I knew him very well before he went abroad.—Then you have not ſeen him ſince he returned? continued ſhe.—I was neither confuſed or agitated; the name of Lord Auberry has ceaſed to give me pleaſure, or afflict me with pain—and I anſwered, calmly, that I had ſeen him accidentally more than once, but I had no ambition of being recognized by his Lordſhip.

You

You are perfectly right, my dear, rejoined Lady Busby, who seems to have taken a great kindness for me; you discriminate with judgment:—I heard but little of Lord Auberry before he left England—he might then have deserved to be the acknowledged acquaintance of the decent part of our sex—but he did not maintain that character on the Continent, which may entitle him to a renewal of it on his return. When abroad, he seduced the wife of his friend, a woman of rank.—I had the misfortune to rate her high in my esteem, on meeting with her some years ago in Italy; she was then married, and I thought her a pattern of modesty, propriety, and decorum, very superior to most of her country-women.—There is now a foreigner living in London, who is visited by Lord Auberry, and by whom, I am pretty well assured, she has a child or children;—I believe her to be the Marchioness.—She sees nobody, except him

and Sir Aſhton Montague, to whom, I fear, Lord Auberry will never be indebted for a reformation of morals. That young man was much with him abroad, and laſt night I ſaw them both at the playhouſe, in Mrs. Oxburn's box, making violent love to her, and receiving no violent diſcouragement.

I was ſhocked at theſe horrible truths; for had they not been truths, they would never have come from the lips of Lady Buſby.—I am not aſhamed to ſay that I was ſhocked by them, becauſe my emotions were unmixed with the weakneſs of jealouſy or tenderneſs; but it was for human nature in general; it was even for myſelf that I felt a momentary, an indeſcribable pang, when I reflected, that two people, who appeared ſo amiable as Lord Auberry did to us, and ſo modeſt as the foreign Lady to a woman of ſo much diſcernment as Lady Buſby,—who then, ſaid I, ſhall depend on their own ſtrength, if ſuch characters as

theſe

theſe can, in the courſe of a few years, be ſo totally ſubverted?—I pitied the ſeduced, but I deteſted the ſeducer.

Our converſation had been interrupted by the return of the two gentlemen. We paſſed the remainder of the evening very agreeably. We ſat down to ſupper at half after ten, and it was but very little more than eleven, when, to my great ſurpriſe, and, I believe, to that of every body preſent, Mr. Lexington made his appearance amongſt us. He ſtarted back on ſeeing what a formidable party of us were aſſembled together; but recovering himſelf in an inſtant, and having paid his compliments, *en paſſant*, to the reſt of the company, he preſſed on to Lady Jane.

I fear, ſaid he, the motive for my intruſion will not inſure me a welcome from your Ladyſhip or your friends.

How ſo? ſhe replied,—I think I may venture to aſſure you, both for them and myſelf, that whatever are your reaſons for doing me the honour of dropping in, the

conſequence will be highly acceptable to us all.

This partial ſentence was generally confirmed, and, ſeating himſelf on a chair which he had moved next to Lady Jane—I am come, ſaid he, at the expreſs command of my aunt, not abſolutely to break up your beautiful circle, (looking round him) but only to withdraw from it one ſingle gem, with which ſhe is ambitious to enrich her own; in plain Engliſh, and not to ſpeak like a puppy, I am commiſſioned to eſcort Miſs Montague to Groſvenor-ſquare, with many acknowledgments for the trouble you have had with her.

His ſpeech began with ſuch a flouriſh, and ended with ſo much drollery, that every body but himſelf laughed without intermiſſion. As ſoon as I could get myſelf heard, I aſked him, if he really brought theſe grateful acknowledgements from the Ducheſs.

No, faith, he replied, her Grace did not ſend them; but I, who know what it is to be

be with you, and that you cannot help tormenting people, thought it neceſſary to deliver them, on my own account.

I next enquired if any body had the goodneſs to ſtudy my accommodation ſo much as to order my chair to Bruton-ſtreet, that I might have it in my power to obey the commands of her Grace, as ſhe choſe to order me home, before my friends were at leiſure to ſet me down?

Why, as to that affair, he replied, I was ſo very officious to ſerve ſomebody elſe, that I forgot what would be moſt pleaſing to you.—Lady Elizabeth Jones's coach was ſtanding in the ſquare, which I borrowed, without aſking leave, and came away to fetch you.

And do you really expect, Mr. Lexington, that I ſhall accept of you for my *chaperon?*

And why not?

Becauſe I am ſo very unpoliſhed as to think, one had better have no guide at all than be badly guided.

I thought as much, ſaid he, from your monſtrous education; and therefore, when I borrowed Lady Elizabeth's coach, I alſo borrowed Lady Elizabeth herſelf. She was ſtepping out when I ſtepped in, ordering the ſervant where to go, and ſhe is now at the door waiting for you, in the ſweeteſt temper imaginable.

I was frightened out of my ſenſes, when I heard what he had done, and taking a haſty leave of Lady Jane and her friends, I flew away, leaving Mr. Lexington to make his adieus, and follow me, which he did the moment after I had ſeated myſelf by Lady Elizabeth in the carriage. I found her Ladyſhip in a much better humour than I expected;—ſhe only laughed at the trick ſhe had been ſerved; and very politely added, ſhe ſhould think no trouble too great to procure the company of ſo good and compliable a young lady as Miſs Montague.

We found the uſual party collected in Groſvenor-ſquare, with ſome additions; but

but when I looked and liſtened, I was forcibly ſtruck by recollecting the words of a noble commoner, when he had got a miſchievous mob together, and was ready to cry out, in his own language, *Theſe are not the right ſort.*

Jan. 24.—Dreſſing Time.

Oh, deareſt grandmamma! what do you think has happened?—Could you have ſuppoſed it poſſible?—Yes, it is true, I aſſure you:—Lord Auberry has the effrontery to ſend word that he is come back, and intends to be here this evening. The Ducheſs is tranſported, but I am oppreſſed—I am confounded with this new proof of his aſſurance. Is it by freſh inſults that he would baniſh from my memory thoſe I

have already received? Can there be a greater proof of unfeelingneſs, than to purſue me with his preſence, where he knows I cannot avoid meeting him?—Yes, I might avoid it, by feigning myſelf indiſpoſed, and keeping my room; but every kind of deception is abhorrent to my nature, and I will meet him;—perhaps it is beſt for me that I ſhould have this opportunity of convincing him, that whilſt I do not forget the common forms of civility, even to him, yet that I alſo remember what is due to the dignity of my own character, as a woman of honour, and a daughter of the houſe of Auberry. With theſe reflections I am again as calm and compoſed as if no ſuch man as Lord Auberry was expected.

Mrs. Tovee being with the Ducheſs and me when his Lordſhip's note was brought in, partook, with her uſual complacency, in the pleaſure expreſſed by her Grace, that ſhe was to have ſo great an acquiſition to her aſſembly.

I always

I always like, ſaid ſhe, when my rooms are ſtuffed with girls who have laboured to make themſelves objects, that they ſhall have as many admirers as I can procure for them,—and Lord Auberry is ſo new, and ſo handſome, that I ſhould be ſure of their being well enough pleaſed, if every other man who is to be here was to diſappoint me.

Well, to be ſure, replied the echo-taught Mrs. Tovee, your Grace is ſo good to young people, it is quite charming;—and ſuppoſe the coronet that belonged to Miſs Montague's grand-father, was at laſt to ſettle on her own head—that too would be charming.

Oh, how I diſlike this woman! I ſhould certainly have given her a little idea of the ſentiments I entertain, both of her wiſdom and ſincerity, if the Ducheſs had not rebuked her with much more cleverneſs than I could have done, by telling her, it was officious and impertinent in people whom ſhe permitted to viſit in her family, to

make thoſe ſort of arrangements for Miſs Montague, or any other perſon under her immediate patronage.

Well; that is charming!—that is ſo like me, Ducheſs, when I married my daughter to a peer,—I let no ſoul adviſe me; and the poor girl is ſo happy, becauſe I never conſulted her about it, that it is charming, charming, to ſee how comfortably my Lord and my Lady now live together.—Well, to be ſure—and they have the fineſt little children.

For Heaven's ſake, have done boring one with your Lord, and your Lady, and your fine little children. It is very odd, continued her Grace, that people, who call themſelves women of faſhion, ſhould be ſo ignorant of common forms and common politeneſs, as to talk of ſubjects which, they muſt know, are improper and diſguſting.

Well, to be ſure, it is ſo odd, that your Grace ſhould never have been a mother,—and one is ſo apt to forget one's ſelf.

Good

Good morning to you, ſaid the Ducheſs, you grow quite diſagreeable,—and walked into her dreſſing-room.

Mrs. Tovee is ſo uſed to deſerve and receive theſe ſort of familiar reprimands, that they did not ſeem in the leaſt to affect her; ſhe only obſerved to me, how unfortunate it was, that whenever her dear friend died, ſhe would leave no repreſentatives behind her. She aſked if her coach was ready, (for ſhe calls her chariot a coach) and being told it was, ſhe took herſelf off, telling me ſhe ſhould come early in the evening; and having got rid of her, at leaſt for the preſent, I came up to tell you what had been paſſing below.

The Duke continues his goodneſs to me, and has given me ſome hints ſimilar to thoſe of the Ducheſs, but in a different manner; he neither wounded my delicacy, by deſiring I would not encourage danglers, or hurt my pride, by making me ſuppoſe the ſituation which he owned to have in view for me was above my pretenſions;—

but who it is, I can no more diſcover now, than when I ſuppoſed it to have been his Highneſs the Mogul.

My hair is juſt finiſhed, and I muſt leave off for this time, as her Grace has deſired I will come to her as ſoon as I am dreſſed, to aſſiſt her in arranging ſome pots of flowers, with which the apartments are to be decorated for this aſſembly.—I wiſh it was over, with all my heart.

Juſt three Quarters after One.

Congratulate your Mary, deareſt grandmamma! her trials are all over, and ſhe has not diſgraced thoſe principles in which your goodneſs inſtructed me, and which I hope are ſo thoroughly fixed on my mind, as to be the laſt thing in this world that I will ever relinquiſh. I have not on this occaſion

occaſion even ſullied them by timidity or weakneſs;—the formidable Lord Auberry has been here; he is gone again—I now only wonder how I could ſo fooliſhly have given way to the fears of an interview with him; and yet the part I had to ſuſtain was ſometimes attended by ſuch difficulty, as made me tremble for my own proweſs; but they did not proceed from Lord Auberry, as you ſhall hear.

The Ducheſs of Cleveland, who never wiſhes to have any trouble that ſhe can reaſonably avoid, had taken ſome pains to inſtruct me in the management of thoſe over-grown multitudes which are called aſſemblies; and having found me no dull ſcholar, in a manner not to be reſiſted, though very much againſt my inclinations, ſhe deputed me to the office ſhe muſt otherwiſe herſelf have filled. When I would have declined it,—I will hear of no excuſe, ſaid ſhe, you will do very well to receive the company,—they may come and ſpeak to me, and I ſhall not be fatigued with them; and

and as to arranging the parties who are to ſit down together, I ſhall appoint Mrs. Oxburn to aſſiſt you.

I did not like my nominal partner, and, colouring with vexation, I requeſted her Grace would allow me to act ſingly, and let me apply to herſelf for any directions that might be neceſſary, in addition to thoſe ſhe had already given me.

Lord, child, that is impoſſible, ſhe replied, I ſhould be deafened with eternal queſtions; Mrs. Oxburn knows every body, and how to conſult their inclinations;—was it left to you, my poor little fooliſh dear, would you ſit down a huſband and wife at the ſame table?

I ſhould certainly try to make every thing pleaſant to your Grace's friends, and can do what you propoſe without calling in the aid of any body.

I thought ſo, ſaid ſhe, laughing,—you are a perfect ignoramus,—I might as well ſhut up my doors in future, as let you commit ſuch a *faux pas*; Mrs. Oxburn knows

knows better, ſhe muſt therefore aſſiſt you, and you will find her uſeful; ſhe will teach you more of modern cuſtoms in half an hour, than you would have learnt at Riverſdale in a century.

Indeed your Grace muſt excuſe me; I would not offend you for the world, but I cannot accept the tutorage of Mrs. Oxburn.

She is my friend, Montague; this diſlike is very unaccountable,—however, ſince you think proper to declare it, I ſhall deſire Lady Elizabeth Jones and Mrs. Tovee to fix themſelves at your elbow, to ſee that you perform your part not like a boarding-ſchool miſs, but a young woman of faſhion.

Could any body have ſuppoſed I ſhould have rejoiced at being aſſociated in office with Lady Elizabeth Jones and Mrs. Tovee? yet I did rejoice, and received the propoſition with ſo much unfeigned pleaſure, and expreſſed ſo much gratitude to her Grace for making it, that her anger

was

was ſubſided, and I heard no more of the odious Mrs. Oxburn.

I have repeated this converſation, as it is a ſort of guide to the cauſe of certain dilemmas, into which I have this night found myſelf plunged, on more occaſions than one.

Before any of the evening company were announced, the Ducheſs gave it in charge to me, that as ſoon as Lord Auberry came in, I ſhould bring him to her; for my being his relation would take off a great deal of needleſs ceremony, when I preſented him to her.

I made ſome fooliſh excuſe or other,—I believe I ſaid I ſhould hardly recollect him, and ſuppoſed he would not retain the leaſt remembrance of me;—but as ſoon as I had an opportunity of ſpeaking to Lady Elizabeth Jones, who had dined with us, and readily conſented that I ſhould officiate under her auſpices, I made my requeſt to her, that when Lord Auberry was announced, ſhe would be ſo good

good as to receive and preſent him to the Ducheſs;—I happened juſt then to be much in her favor, her Grace having repeated what had paſſed about Mrs. Oxburn;—ſhe approved of my refuſal, and was flattered by the preference I had given to herſelf, ſo that ſhe did not deny me the moſt eſſential favor I ever have, or perhaps ever ſhall, aſk of her Ladyſhip.

Mrs. Tovee came a full hour before any body elſe, as fine as yellow gauze and waſhed blond could make her;—the Ducheſs, who had long before forgiven her miſtakes of the morning, received her as if nothing had happened, and I was conſigned to the joint direction of the two ladies.

At the firſt approach of viſitors, they ſtationed me juſt within the door of the reception room, and themſelves quite near me;—I ſpoke a few words to every body as they entered, and thought I made the moſt ſilly figure in the world, but Lady Elizabeth loaded me with praiſes; and as

to

to Mrs. Tovee, ſhe almoſt wore out her favorite words of charming! charming! with uſing them in my ſervice; there were ſome ladies and ſome gentlemen whom I had not ſeen before, and to thoſe I was myſelf preſented by Lady Elizabeth.—Every body paſſed on to the room where the Ducheſs had retired to receive their compliments, and in leſs than an hour ſix very large drawing-rooms were at leaſt more than half filled, and the frequent bending of my knees had reduced me to an abſolute ſtate of trembling, not unlike the cold fit of an ague;—I was every moment expecting Lord Auberry, but no Lord Auberry appeared;—Lady Jane Petworth, and the whole party with whom I paſſed my time ſo pleaſantly yeſterday, were not amongſt the lateſt who arrived, and their preſence gave a ſort of freedom to my ſpirits, of which, till then, I had not known the comfort;—after going through the apartments, they all, or at leaſt the greateſt part of them, returned to me, and became

ſta-

ſtationary like myſelf. At half an hour after eleven, by Lord Felton's watch, who ſtood with it in his hand, counting how many came in, from minute to minute, there was ſo conſiderable a ceſſation of repeated thunderings at the door, that my two conductreſſes led the way to the inner rooms, and aſſiſted me to arrange the parties;—I was opening the cards for a ſet of cribbage players, when feeling one of my hands ſuddenly ſeized, not ſeeing by whom, and always having the fear of Lord Auberry before my eyes, I gave a violent ſtart, and let them drop on the carpet,—my dear creature! cried Mrs. Oxburn, for it was ſhe, what in the name of electricity ails you?—did you think it was your lover, going to bear you off in the face of a thouſand rivals, that you felt ſo alarmed at my touch?—but, my dear, ſhe continued, I really beg your pardon if I ſurpriſed you, I am but this moment come in;—pray can you tell me if Lord Auberry is here? or Sir Aſhton Montague?

and

and what is become of Lexington? I have been peeping all over the houſe, and can ſee none of them.

The gentleman ſhe laſt named, with Lord Felton, and two or three more, were ſtanding round the card table when I gave them a ſpecimen of my aukwardneſs, by letting the cards drop from my hand, and they had all ſtooped down with much good-nature to pick them up again;—Mr. Lexington hearing Mrs. Oxburn enquire for him, ſaid to her, I am ſorry, Madam, you ſhould have had the trouble of purſuing me, and be ſo long diſappointed; ſhall I go and ſearch for the other two, after whom, it ſeems, you have been peeping,—by Heavens! here they come! added he; and at the ſame inſtant Lord Auberry and Sir Aſhton Montague were actually announced.

I am not conſcious that my countenance underwent any change, and yet I ſuppoſe I might at that moment look a little paler than uſual, becauſe Mr. Lexington ſaid,

I ſee

I ſee you are tired to death with ſtanding ſo long—I muſt make you ſit down, drawing me to a chair that happened to be vacant—and I will attend you till you are pronounced out of danger. He placed himſelf behind me, and ſaid a thouſand lively things, in ridicule of polite mobbing. I forgot, in his entertaining ſallies, the ſubject of my fears, and venturing to look round me, I ſaw Lady Elizabeth Jones, followed by the two friends, juſt paſſing the door which led to the inner drawing-room. Mrs. Oxburn had alſo diſappeared, but I did not ſee which way ſhe went.—Her figure and face are remarkably beautiful; and I never ſaw her look half ſo handſome as ſhe did this evening.—What a pity it is, that a body ſo perfect ſhould conceal a mind ſo depraved!

When I had reſted a few minutes, I returned to my office, made myſelf as uſeful, and kept myſelf as buſy as I could. I obſerved Sir Aſhton coming up to me, and did not try to avoid him. After the

firſt compliments had paſſed, which, on my part, were civil, but reſerved—on his, exceedingly eaſy and unconſtrained, he aſked what I had done with Lord Auberry?

With Lord Auberry! repeated I—upon my word, Sir, I can give you no account of him; I thought I heard you both announced at the ſame time—but was ſo much engaged, that I did not look round to ſee if I was miſtaken or not.

And pray, my fair couſin, is your negligence general or partial? the Ducheſs tells me ſhe has appointed you her repreſentative.—Do you hear all names announced with the ſame indifference as, by your own confeſſion, you did thoſe of Auberry and Montague?—In my opinion, there are no two names in the world that would ſound ſo happily, were they in uniſon with each other.

Ah! thought I, this man is in the confidence of Lord Auberry—and it is he who has taught him to inſult me. I looked at him—he is called handſome—

but

but at that moment he appeared quite ugly—for I ſaw, under his ſmiling countenance, duplicity, pique, and malice. I did not heſitate to make him a reply—had I remained ſilent, I might have been ſuppoſed to approve his inſidious meaning. I was determined he ſhould have no reaſon to think I even underſtood it, and, therefore, only replied, in a tone of *nonchalence*, It was not likely, from the ſteadineſs of both their diſpoſitions, that the friendſhip of Sir Aſhton Montague and Lord Auberry would ever allow of their names being diſunited.

He made me a ſlight bow, turned on his heel—and I heard him mutter to himſelf, as he went away, She is d——'d haughty, I ſee.

I am ſorry to ſtain my paper with an oath; but you would know leſs of the man if I had omitted it.

Several gentlemen were ſtanding round as this ſhort converſation paſſed between us—and I was hurt, by the attention with which

which they ſeemed to examine me. Mr. Lexington was not one of them—I wiſhed he had been there—I wanted the preſence of a third perſon, with whom, as one of the family, and the earlieſt of my acquaintance, I might have talked away my chagrin.

Mrs. Tovee was, by this time, ſeated at a table—we had diſpenſed with her further aſſiſtance—and I had not ſeen my other directreſs for a quarter of an hour. Lady Jane was alſo engaged at play; but dear Miſs Beaulieu and the lovely Miſs Forteſcue had neither of them forſaken me, except, at the very critical moment when I ſhould have found their ſupport very much to my own advantage, Miſs Beaulieu was dragged to a diſtance from me, by ſome inquiſitive girls, who, ſhe afterwards told me, aſked her a thou[illegible]d queſtions, of which I was the ſubject; and Miſs Forteſcue had croſſed the room, to ſpeak to her aunt, the Marchioneſs of Stair, who was there, with her two unmarried daugh-

ters. I ſhall have occaſion to ſpeak of them in another place.

From the time Lord Auberry had made his firſt *entre*, I did not venture to go beyond the door, through which he had paſſed, in his way to the inner apartments; and as I looked pretty often towards it, alway dreading his return, I ſaw Lady Elizabeth Jones, with her erect head towering above the middle of the crowd, who are conſtantly, I obſerve, coming out at one door and going in at another; and I ſaw, alſo, that ſhe ſtuck in the midſt—and that it was impoſſible for her to move backwards or forwards—ſhe beckoned me—I got as near her as it was in my power to do—and as ſoon as a paſſage was made, that we could form an union, ſhe deſired I would find my way to the Ducheſs as well as I could, her Grace having ſomething or other that ſhe wiſhed to ſay to me. I requeſted ſhe would go back with me—Not for the world, ſhe ſaid—the men were ſo heedleſs, and the women ſo im-

pertinent, ſhe had nearly got ſqueezed to death in bringing me the meſſage; but here, added her Ladyſhip, is Lord Felton, who, I dare ſay, will give himſelf the trouble to convey you through the ill-bred multitude—he politely offered me his hand, and I accepted the eſcort ſhe had appointed me.

Do you think I did not expect to encounter Lord Auberry at every ſtep I advanced? No—indeed I had much ſtronger apprehenſions that I ſhould have found him with the Ducheſs—and there I did find him, ſeated too at the ſame table with herſelf. When I ſaw him ſitting oppoſite to her Grace, and his back towards the door, I would have given worlds to have made my retreat; but could I have declared to Lord Felton that I was either aſhamed or afraid to meet the man who is the repreſentative of my mother's family? he had heard the meſſage delivered to me by Lady Elizabeth Jones. What reaſon, then, could I have aſſigned, but the true

one,

one, for my caprice, if I had turned back without firſt aſking the commands of her Grace? My ſituation was truly deplorable; but I ventured on, at all hazards—methought your dear voice ſeemed to encourage the effort I was making—I heard you ſay, in imagination, Now is the moment, Mary, to convince Lord Auberry that he is neither the object of your preference or of your reſentment.

I walked ſteadily towards the Ducheſs's chair, but choſe to take my ſtation at the ſide rather than behind it, where I could not have eſcaped the notice of her partner. She did not obſerve me, till I ſaid to her, I am here, Madam—Lady Elizabeth Jones informed me your Grace wanted me.—That is true, child, ſaid ſhe—but wait till I have played this hand out;—you are mighty myſterious, and I am quite puzzled to find out what you are all about. She was ſpeaking of her cards, and to her party; but her words ſeemed ſo applicable to my own caſe, that I coloured like

ſcarlet. I did not know if Lord Auberry had obſerved me, for I never looked towards him.

Well, my dear, continued her Grace, as ſoon as the hand was over and another deal began, I ſent for you to know if you are not half dead with the fatigues that muſt have attended your exertions? She ſaid a good deal more, much to the ſame purpoſe, whilſt ſhe was taking up her cards, and ſorting them.

I thanked the Ducheſs for her obliging conſideration of me, and aſſured her it was impoſſible I ſhould feel any of the effects ſhe apprehended, as Lord Felton and Mr. Lexington had taken the whole trouble on themſelves, and nothing but pleaſure had been the reſult of my agreeable employment.

I have revoked, cried Lord Auberry, ſlapping his cards on the table.

But, my very good Lord, replied her Grace, you ſhould not proclaim your own errors, your adverſaries would ſoon enough have diſcovered them.

My

My God! ſaid he, I would this moment confeſs a thouſand more, if I had any hopes they would be forgiven.

No, replied Lady Francis Lexington, who was playing againſt him, we cannot pardon you the revoke, and muſt take the forfeit; you are eight—ſo we will only take two from your ſcore, and add one to our own.

Would to God, Madam, you would take from the ſcore of my days all that are yet to come of them, and add them to your own.

Have done, my Lord, with this deſpairing ſort of repentance; if you will be more cautious in future, we may yet recover the fault. This was ſaid by the Ducheſs.

Never, never, he replied—I am thrown out of play, and the game is loſt to me for ever.

It was the rubber game—and the next deal decided it in their favour.—Lord Auberry remained ſilent—and I attempted to make my releaſe; but the Ducheſs called

me back—Stay where you are, ſaid ſhe, a few minutes, and decide our fortune—the good luck you have brought with you will predominate, even over the petit errors of your abſent couſin.

It was decided at the moment ſhe ſpoke; and Lord Auberry, hearing me addreſſed by the appellation of his couſin, could no longer carry on his pretended ignorance of my being ſo near him—he, therefore, made me a very formal bow, which I returned by a curtſey ſtill more formal.

Bleſs me! cried the Ducheſs, a good deal ſurpriſed, is this the firſt time, Miſs Montague, that you have ſeen Lord Auberry ſince he has been here?

Indeed it is, ſaid I; and the firſt time I have ſeen his Lordſhip theſe two years.

I find you very much changed, retorted he, in upbraiding accents, ſince I had the honour of ſeeing you at Riverſdale.

From ſixteen, my Lord, to five-and-twenty, our forms, as well as inclinations, are ſubject to revolutions. I ſuppoſe I

am

am a head taller; and I know that I am much more accountable to the laws of reaſon, than at that giddy period of my life when you honoured Lady Auberry with your company at Riverſdale.

I hope Lady Auberry is well, he replied, with undeſcribable coolneſs—I beg, Miſs Montague, when you write, you will do me the honour to preſent my compliments to her Ladyſhip.

I ſhall, certainly, my Lord, execute your commiſſion.—I had ſaid enough, and would venture to ſay no more; the Ducheſs was engaged in collecting her bets, and putting up her winnings. I took the opportunity of her being employed, and walked down the room, attended, as before, by Lord Felton. I afterwards ſaw Lord Auberry ſeveral times—but he was always ſo much engaged with Mrs. Oxburn, that, I believe, he did not ſee me; however his conſcience might have been affected at firſt ſeeing me, the diſorder was not of any long continuance—for whenever

I ſaw him afterwards, he was rattling away, in the higheſt ſpirits imaginable. I was ſtanding near the door at the time Mrs. Oxburn came out to wait for her carriage; Lord Auberry and Sir Aſhton Montague were each honoured with one of her fair hands.

The remainder of this eventful evening I muſt leave till to-morrow—the clock has ſtruck five—good morning to you, dear grand-mamma! I was never in better health or ſpirits in my life.

Jan. 25.—Morning.

I did not expect the two friends would come back any more when they went out; but I forgot to tell you, that paſſing me at the door, Lord Auberry, in catching Mrs. Oxburn, who did ſtumble, or pre-

tended

tended to have done ſo, trod on my foot, and that not very lightly, for he is of a much greater ſize than when you ſaw him laſt; it gave me ſome pain, but I made no complaint. He turned half round, caſt on me a look of fury rather than contrition, and ſaid, I beg your pardon, Miſs Montague.

They were abſent more than twenty minutes, and I was diſappointed when I ſaw them return—but a thouſand times more mortified to underſtand the Ducheſs had engaged them to ſup with her; Lady Jane and her party were alſo invited, but did not ſtay—we ſhould therefore have ſat down with our own family only, in which I include Mr. Lexington, who has no home more familiar to him than this—if a fortunate accident that happened to Lady Stair's carriage, in its way to Groſvenor-ſquare, had not detained her ſo late, that her Grace was under the neceſſity of adding to it the Marchioneſs and her two daughters, whom ſhe abominably hates,

though they are on the beſt terms in the world.

Before I proceed, I muſt give you a ſketch of theſe three ladies, partly from my own obſervation, but much more from the inſormation of others.

The Marchioneſs was a needy woman of quality—her father's houſe was burthened with a long train of children, whom he could not provide for by all the manœuvres of politics, and all the ſavings of parſimony, ſo as to bequeath them a very moderate independence.

Lady Termagant Touchwood had ſeen ſome of her ſiſters well married, but was herſelf, at the age of thirty, unſolicited—ſhe then formed an intimacy with a lady of high rank, and, under a maſk of hypocriſy, continued to enjoy the benefit of her friendſhip till the hour of her death, ſince which ſhe has behaved with ſuch unheard-of treachery to one part of her patroneſs's family, who ſhe knew was, by far, the deareſt to her of any other object upon earth,

earth, that the ſtigmas of ingratitude and cruelty can never be wiped from her character; and after hearing the particulars, which are too long for repetition, I can never look at her without almoſt ſickening with horror; her very countenance is diſguſting; it is ſo impregnated with frowns, hauteur, and concealment, that a ſmile is the moſt unbecoming thing in nature, when ſhe attempts to vail them with an appearance of affability and good humour. The preſent dignity to which ſhe is advanced ſhe owes entirely to the mediation of that friend, on whoſe aſhes, it may be ſaid, ſhe has trampled with more than inhumanity.

Of the young ladies, her daughters, I can only ſay, that they are like a hundred other young ladies, who were at the Duchеſs's aſſembly laſt night, abundantly lively, and abundantly loaded with foil and feathers.

The Duke of Cleveland would have me ſit by him at ſupper; Mr. Lexington was

next to me, on the other ſide; Lord Auberry placed himſelf between Lady Bell and Lady Bridget Langton; and Sir Aſhton Montague deſired he might be left at his liberty to walk about, often putting his hand to his forehead, as if he had a violent pain in it;—his excuſes were admitted, and he was ſuffered to do as he pleaſed.

At firſt, he divided his attention pretty equally, ſometimes talking to the Ducheſs, ſometimes to Lady Stair, and ſometimes to her daughters, but avoided ſpeaking to or looking at me.

Mr. Lexington was not in his uſual flow of ſpirits;—perhaps he likes one of the Lady Langtons, for he ſcarcely took his eyes from Lord Auberry, who, one might have ſuppoſed, from his aſſiduities and apparent happineſs, was a very favoured lover.

Lady Stair ſeemed quite delighted, and dropped ſome hints of encouragement, which I thought were even extended to Mr. Lexington, who perhaps ſhe conceived to be examining the countenance of her

daughter

daughter with admiration, inſtead of ſcrutiniſing that of Lord Auberry with ſomething like envy, at his ſuperior felicity.

In the mean time, when he ſaw the general attention pretty much attracted by the ſituation of his friends, Sir Aſhton Montague ſlid round, took his poſt at the back of my chair, and leaning almoſt cloſe to my ear, ſaid, in a whiſper ſo low that I could hardly hear him,

Beware of appearances, they will deceive you;—confide in Auberry, he will not betray you.

I never felt my judgment more inſulted, than at the moment he dared to addreſs me with caution ſo unneceſſary, and advice ſo indelicate, ſo prepoſterous. I turned immediately to the Duke, and ſaid aloud, —You are ſo gracious, my Lord, to honour me with the title of your ward, and here is a gentleman whiſpering wonders in my ear, which ſurpaſs credulity, and are very much beyond my feeble comprehenſion;—will you permit me to refer him to your

your Grace for the ſolution of his very extraordinary hypotheſis?

Huſh, cried Sir Aſhton, not another queſtion, I beſeech you:—con it over on your pillow, and you will ſolve it without difficulty.

There are many enquiries not worth our while to enter into; and you will excuſe me, Sir Aſhton, if I declare that your propoſition is of ſo little importance to me, whether it be true or otherwiſe, that I really ſhall not ſuffer the conſideration of it to diſturb one moment of my repoſe.

Not only the Duke, but every body preſent, except Lord Auberry, teſtified much curioſity to have the whiſper expounded: however, I had ſaid enough to explain my ſentiments, if they really needed explanation, and ſuffered Sir Aſhton Montague to get out of his dilemma as well as he could.

I hope I ſhall never be the ſubject of circle chit-chat; and, to avoid it as well as I could, I endeavoured to hide my unconquerable

querable reſerve towards Lord Auberry, whoſe connection would have given him the greateſt claim to my confidence, had he never ungenerouſly abuſed it. How, thought I, will the world account for this ſtrangeneſs between two people who are known to be related? will it be to my advantage?—perhaps not; I will give them no opportunity of remarking on my conduct; and I conſtrained myſelf often to mix in the ſame converſation with Lord Auberry, as if we were on equal good terms with the reſt of faſhionable relations; but whilſt avoiding the obſervation I dreaded, by a condeſcenſion that coſt my dignity ſome price, I guarded my words with ſo much caution, that I readily obſerved, the ſacrifice I paid to prudence was by no means an offering to the vanity of Lord Auberry.

I have now done with yeſterday—this day, I hope, will be a leſs buſy one. Lord Selby, Lord Silveſter, and Sir James Melvern have all engaged me to dance with them;

them; I ſuppoſe Mr. Lexington keeps himſelf for ſomebody elſe, but he ſays he is very ill, and ſhall not dance at all.

Dreſſing Time.

I did not deſign to make any addition to my journal till I returned from Lady Elderton's, but on going down ſtairs I met a ſervant from the Ducheſs, who was ſent to tell me her Grace wiſhed to ſee me; and in conſequence of this meſſage, I have ſtill ſomething to add.

A note lay on the table before her; ſhe bid me read it, and ſhe would afterwards tell me more of her ſtrange viſitor. As well as I can recollect, the words were theſe:

"If

"If the Ducheſs of Cleveland has not been miſrepreſented to her petitioner, ſhe will have the goodneſs to order her immediate admiſſion—to grant her a ſhort audience—to receive her alone—to anſwer a few queſtions, but to aſk none."

Aſtoniſhing, cried I, was there ever any thing half ſo romantic?—but did your Grace admit her?

Certainly, and on her own terms, which I never attempted to infringe. My curioſity would have ſubmitted to any thing rather than remain ungratified. I will tell you all that paſſed between us, and then leave the clearing up ſome ſuſpicions, which I am beginning to entertain, to your own ingenuous candour and frankneſs.

Good God! madam, what can you mean?—What ſuſpicions have I to remove?—What can I have to do with this myſtery?—I was oppoſite to a glaſs, and looking up, ſaw a deadly paleneſs ſpreading on my face; I trembled all over, and ſhould perhaps have fainted, if ſhe had not immediately

diately added,—don't frighten yourſelf, child,—the queſtions I have to aſk you ſhould be rather the foundation of congratulation than terror. You are a wonderful girl indeed, if the being put in mind of an old conqueſt, any more than the making of a new one, ſhould give you diſpleaſure. But liſten to me, and when I have told my ſtory, you ſhall tell me as much or as little of your own as you pleaſe.

I thanked her Grace, and begged ſhe would keep me no longer in a ſtate of ſuſpence, which, I could not but confeſs, was extremely painful.

Having read and conſidered the note, ſaid ſhe, I ſent Johnſon to aſk amongſt the ſervants, who it was that had delivered it? they told her that the perſon was a female, and then ſitting in a hackney chair at the door, where ſhe waited for the return of my anſwer; that the curtains were cloſe drawn, and they only knew her to be a woman, from her having expoſed a very beautiful hand when ſhe dropped the glaſs and thruſt out her little

little billet, which ſhe deſired might be inſtantly conveyed to me, and ſhe would wait my commands where ſhe was.

I bid Johnſon loſe no time in bringing her to me, and in conſideration of the evident reluctance ſhe had to ſhew herſelf, I alſo ordered her to uſe ſuch precaution, by ſending every body out of the way, that ſhe might come in and go out without obſervation. To tell you the truth, I had taken it into my head this was ſome begging gentlewoman—but a very proud one I conceived her to be, as much by the ſtile of her note as her coming to aſk alms in a chair. I like odd characters, and was determined to divert myſelf at her expence, by ſeeing how far ſhe intended to carry her ſhabby gentility; at any rate, a few guineas might be of ſervice—and I took two from my purſe, in readineſs to preſent them to her.

It is eaſy enough to tell you what ſort of a creature I expected to have ſeen—but it is impoſſible to deſcribe to you the aſſemblage

blage of grace and beauty that I really did ſee in this ſtranger; and yet a very ſmall part of her face was viſible; a large hood covered the profile, and a bonnet ſhaded her forehead; a deep black veil would have excluded the whole of her countenance, had ſhe not, in compliment to me, I ſuppoſe, faſtened it up in the middle with a pin, which gave me a tranſient view of perfect lovelineſs. I do not know of what rank ſhe really is; but, to judge from the haughty dignity of her deportment, and the ſuperior force of her expreſſion, ſhe might be taken for the Empreſs of the Univerſe. I bluſhed at my idea of the begging gentlewoman—was aſhamed of my two-guinea offering—returned it to my pocket, and aſked her commands, with as much humility as if I had myſelf been nothing better than one of her bed-chamber women.

I did not interrupt her Grace; but whilſt I liſtened, I alſo thought, What a prodigy of attraction, to occaſion ſuch ſentiments,

ſentiments, and to be the cauſe of ſuch a confeſſion!

You will ſay I am running on very wildly, Miſs Montague, continued the Ducheſs; but, really, ſuch were the impreſſions made on me by the firſt appearance of this ſtranger. She was very ſoon ſeated—for, with a freedom that ſeemed to do me honour, ſhe did not wait my ſolicitations, but placed herſelf next the fire, and ſeemed to ſay, I will allow you to take the ſeat neareſt to me.

I repeated my requeſt to be informed what were her commands, and in what manner I could be of uſe to her?

I meet, ſaid ſhe, in the Ducheſs of Cleveland, all I was taught to expect from the condeſcenſion and politeneſs ſo often experienced by the people of my country, from the *Nobleſſe* of yours.

Her language was Engliſh, and perfectly correct, but her accent was Italian, and her voice in tune with the ſweeteſt harmony of her own nation.

The foreign lady, of whom I had heard Lady Buſby ſpeak ſo lately, occurred to my remembrance; yes, thought I, this muſt be the miſtreſs of Lord Auberry, and it is about Lord Auberry that I am to be queſtioned by the Ducheſs:—Thought is the ſwifteſt meſſenger of the heart, and, ſtopping at the door of my lips, it made no pauſe in her Grace's narrative.

From the Ducheſs of Cleveland, proceeded my new viſitor, I hope to find more than condeſcenſion, more than politeneſs,—I aſk for her forgiveneſs, and I demand her ſincerity;—are you acquainted, madam, with Lord Auberry?—have you a young lady under your protection, of the name of Montague?—is not Lord Auberry attached to Miſs Montague?—are they not affianced to each other?—

I ſhall anſwer you, Madam, ſaid I, without reſerve.

And you will have the goodneſs, returned ſhe, to ſpare me;—I bluſh that I cannot be candid as yourſelf, but it is impoſſible!

impoſſible!—a tear fell on her cheek,—ſhe turned haſtily from my obſervation, as ſuddenly wiped it off, as if aſhamed to have given me even this ſingle proof of her weakneſs.

I aſſured her that my curioſity ſhould be no tax on her ſenſibility; and that, though the queſtions ſhe had put to me were calculated to ſurpriſe, they did not offend me, as I could anſwer them very eaſily, without doing violence to my own inclinations, to truth, or to friendſhip:—Firſt, you aſk, am I acquainted with Lord Auberry?—I never ſpoke to him till laſt night; he was then at my aſſembly, and did me the honor to ſtay ſupper;—Miſs Montague, the grand daughter of the late Lord Auberry, is at this time a part of my family, but of any attachment between her and the preſent Earl, I am quite uninformed; on the contrary, I have reaſon to believe, ſhe is almoſt as much a ſtranger to his Lordſhip as I am.

She

She ſhook her head, roſe up, thanked me for my extreme condeſcenſion to the peculiarity of her ſituation, and was conducted back by Johnſon, who waited in the next room, with as much privacy as ſhe entered;—and now, my dear, I muſt confeſs, that the movement of her head, and the ſmile of incredulity ſtamped on her expreſſive countenance, has left an impreſſion on my mind, that it is only in your power to obliterate.

I never intended to have troubled her Grace with my confidence, but thus called upon, I cheerfully made a ſacrifice to truth, of falſe pride, and falſe delicacy;—I had no reſerve whatever,—ſhe is now acquainted with all that paſſed prior to Lord Auberry's going abroad, to his conduct whilſt on the Continent, I mean that part of it in which I am concerned; ſhe is alſo informed, that the preference I once felt for him, has been long converted to the moſt calm and ſettled indifference, never

never again to ſuffer any diminution;—I do not hate Lord Auberry, ſaid I, ſuch a ſentiment might be the enemy of my peace, and undermine my tranquility;—I meet him with the ſame compoſure as I ſhould have done, if he had not marked me out as one of the objects of his changeable inclinations;—I pardon his inconſtancy,—I wiſh him happy as my relation, and I extend my wiſhes of happineſs to the intereſting ſubject of his preſent purſuits; ſhe has nothing to fear on my account, and I would give the world, if it was in my power, to quiet her apprehenſions; her ſituation, I fear, is not a doubtful one, but it has ſtill a claim on my compaſſion.

The Ducheſs declared herſelf very well pleaſed with my adventures, as ſhe was pleaſed to call the relation I had made her;—approved of my paſt conduct and my preſent ſentiments, loaded me with careſſes, promiſed not to betray the confidence I had repoſed in her, and, finally,

hinted again the old ſtory of the Great Mogul (ſo I muſt call this unknown half of myſelf, as long as he continues in obſcurity.)

Mr. Lexington has ſent his excuſes for not attending us to Lady Elderton's; he pleads illneſs. The Duke is gone to ſee how he does, and the Ducheſs is not quite eaſy about him.

Some are languid, ſome are ſick, ſome are dying with fatigue,—How comes it that I bear this laborious buſineſs of diſſipation better than any body?—Lady Jane Petworth ſays, it is becauſe I do not wear out my ſtrength in making preparations; but I rather attribute it to the goodneſs of my conſtitution.

Lord and Lady Francis dine with us to-day;—we ſhall all miſs poor Mr. Lexington, but I hope he will ſoon get well enough to come amongſt us again. I wonder if his ſiſters are to be at the ball to-night;—I ſhould ſuppoſe not, if their brother is ſeriouſly indiſpoſed;—and yet nurſing the ſick

ſick is, I can diſcover, no faſhionable town employment.

I wiſh this ball was over, for I do not like any one of my partners; you cannot conceive how they teize me with ſtudied compliments, which I do not like to receive, and know not how to anſwer; I would dance myſelf to death rather than ſit ſtill a quarter of an hour with either of them.

Oh, how little did the Ducheſs of Cleveland know of my ſentiments, when ſhe cautioned me againſt encouraging danglers! If I was the wickedeſt creature in the world, I ſhould think the ſevereſt puniſhment for my ſins would be that denunciation that would ſentence me to hear my own praiſes from the mouth of Lord Selby, Lord Silveſter, and Sir James Melvin.

Jan. 25th.—Morning, Four o'Clock.

I quitted, even at this late hour, Lady Elderton and her aſſembly with reluctance.

Herſelf, her company, her muſic, her ſupper—every thing charmed me: there was no Lord Auberry to keep me in perpetual apprehenſion—no Sir Aſhton Montague to follow and inſult me: my partners did not incommode me with any attentions beyond thoſe of civility and politeneſs; and when I had gone down with the three firſt, they were ſucceeded by others, who, I am obliged to confeſs, were ten times more agreeable than themſelves.

Lady Jane, Miſs Beaulieu, and Miſs Forteſcue were there, but did not ſtay long after ſupper. Miſs Beaulieu will entertain you with all the particulars, which I have not time to enumerate. I have taken an affectionate farewell of that dear friend, and ſhall now ſeal up my Journal;—receive it, beſt beloved of parents, as the ſhadow of your Mary's thoughts, and the tranſcript of her heart.

LETTER

LETTER XVII.

Dowager Lady Auberry, to Lady Jane Petworth.

Riverſdale, Jan. 21, 17—.

I Accuſe you, madam, of having diſturbed my repoſe, of breaking in on the dead and heavy calm in which I had wrapt myſelf at the latter end of my journey, as with a cloak,—not to guard againſt the ſtorms of the world—it has had no ſtorm for me ſince my dear little Mary firſt prattled at my ſide. I wore this internal garb of apathy, to ſecure my peace from the invaſion of the world's follies, its tumults, and its anxieties; and what have you done?—you have diſſevered this garment, there are now a thouſand breaches in it, and I am overwhelmed. Joy, hope, fear, pride, and expectation ruſhing in, there is no reſiſt-

ing their impetuoſity.——Inſtead of ſaying my prayers and going to bed, as I uſed to do, and as all old women ſhould do, the laſt office I perform, is to ſit down at my fire-ſide, and read over all your inflammatory letters, 'till I lie down, with my head and my heart ſo full of the fine things you have told me, that when I ſhould ſhut out all worldly objects, and go quietly to ſleep, I ſee nothing but Mary Montague before my eyes, dreſſed for court,—gentle, ſoft, captivating, as you deſcribe her, followed by many, admired by all, and adored by your amiable Lexington. Theſe are the ideas for which you have forced me to exchange all my ſtore of nothings, and all my wealth of dulneſs.

I think almoſt as much of your Mr. Lexington as I do of my own Mary. If he has the good fortune to engage her heart, my own ſhall be divided between them.

The imagination of old people, like a fire that has been long ſmothered, if it ever does

does rekindle, is not indolent in its progreſs, or eaſily extinguiſhed. When I had once got hold of certain romantic whims, I could not relinquiſh them. I fell aſleep with a thouſand chimeras in my brain; and when I ſhould have been dreaming of death and the doctor, I was transformed into a fine lady, dreſſed out, and gadding about every where with my Mary.

You tell me of a Lord Selby, a Lord Silveſter, and a Sir James Melvin, who, you ſuſpect, will be the rivals of Mr. Lexington. Nor him, nor them, nor any other man in the univerſe, ſhall wear my roſe in his boſom, but at her own election. No, my dear friend, ſhe has diſcretion above her age, and refinement above her ſex: the firſt will govern her choice, the latter will ſecure her happineſs. Theſe are ſure guides; we may ſafely leave her under their direction.

The dear child has aſked me, in one of her letters, ſome leading queſtions reſpecting the fate of her parents. I think it is

time now that ſhe ſhould be informed of the circumſtances attending their marriage and her own birth. I rely on your friendſhip for me, and your affection for Mary, to break them to her with all the ſoftening ſuch painful particulars will admit of, and all the tenderneſs of which your own tender heart is capable.

Ah! my good friend, my kind Lady Jane, this afflicting taſk ſhould not have devolved on you; but it was the requeſt of her father, that the morning of her days might not be clouded with the repreſentation of ſcenes gloomy and ſorrowful: For if my daughter, ſaid he, in the laſt letter I ever received from him, ſhould be of an unfeeling volatile diſpoſition, a too early knowledge of our misfortunes will have no other effect on her heart, than to render it more callous to the claims of ſenſibility;—perhaps they may coſt her ſome tears, but at the firſt ſummons of pleaſure, theſe tears will be wiped away. She might occaſionally think of our ſufferings, but when they return

return upon her recollection, ſhe is in danger of drawing compariſons, which will make her paſs over the ſufferings of her fellow-creatures too lightly. Let her reaſon, therefore, be matured, before her paſſions are aſſailed; then may the trials of her parents ſerve as a leſſon of humanity to herſelf. On the other ſide, ſhould her mind be timid, flexible, abounding with ſenſibility, ſubject to tender, melancholy impreſſions, the reaſon for abſolute ſilence ſtill ſubſiſts, at leaſt till her conſtitutional weakneſs has acquired ſtrength by the force of experience and the energy of reaſon. In one inſtance, it is the good of many I conſult; in the other, I conſider only the preſervation of her own happineſs.

Are you not a convert, my dear Lady Jane, to the arguments ſo forcibly advanced by my unfortunate ſon-in-law? and can you blame me that I have hitherto complied with them, to the very ſtrictneſs of his meaning? I was not altogether biaſſed to the ſecrecy I have preſerved merely in

obedience to his injunctions; becauſe they in a manner ſtill left me at liberty. The diſpoſition of his daughter anſwered not to his deſcriptive images.—No; the diſpoſitions of my Mary were compounded of ſound judgment, invariable ſteadineſs, innocent gaiety, noble candour, univerſal philanthropy, affections without credulity, and ſenſibility without weakneſs. It was not that I feared ſhe would feel too little or too much, that I did not make the ſad relation of my woes at a much earlier period; but an event that happened to herſelf, and which has ended in a diſappointment, made me hold back that information, which could only tend to caſt an hereditary gloom over her own faded proſpects, and to give her an idea, that ſhe was to be wretched by inheritance.

You aſk, how her heart has hitherto been affected? I ſhall tell you every thing without diſguiſe. Indeed I was prepared to gratify your requeſt before it was made; and in thoſe lonely hours, when I had no

Mary

Mary to ſolace me, I ſketched out a ſort of narrative for your inſpection, which you will receive with this letter.

I write to Mary by the poſt; I ſend my packet to you by a private hand, as I think ſhe had better not exactly know what paſſes between you and I in our preſent correſpondence. She does not like to be told of lovers, ſo let us not be ſuppoſed to have found out that ſhe has particular attractions for any body.

The more I reflect on Miſs Beaulieu's goodneſs to me, the ſtronger is my debt of gratitude to her, and I am quite in deſpair when I feel my inability to diſcharge it. I expect her with the impatience of a friend, and I ſhall love her with the fondneſs of a mother. I only wait her arrival at Riverſdale to prevail on my poor Martin, who I fear is in a bad ſtate of health, to try the change of air. At preſent, I cannot get her to hear me on the ſubject, but when I am ſo happy as to have another Mary Mon-

tague with me, I will liſten to no more of her objections.

I have ſtill to make the addition of a few ſtrokes to my miniature picture of man's inconſtancy, and ſhall, my dear friend, bid you adieu to finiſh it.

M. AUBERRY.

ANNALS

ANNALS OF LOVE,

(NOT MODERN.)

PART THE FIRST.

Written by Lady Auberry, and addreſſed to Lady Jane Petworth.

A Daughter of Lord Baſil, and the heireſs to a conſiderable fortune, met Mr. Pleydell at an aſſembly:—he was handſome, ſhe young;—they were inchanted with each other at firſt ſight.—His propoſals were made in form to her father, and were rejected for no other reaſon in the world, but becauſe the lady had rank and riches, and the gentleman was but ill accommodated with either. Proſpects he had, and theſe proſpects terminated in an earldom; but

but the perſpective was at ſuch an immenſe diſtance, Lord Baſil could not, or would not ſee it:—and as to his eſtate, that, alas! was entirely perſonal.

The lady, ſuppoſing her father's ſcrutiny too partial, undertook herſelf to examine the propriety of her lover's pretenſions, and found out, in his open, manly, and beautiful countenance, ſuch treaſures of virtue, ſuch inexhauſtible mines of happineſs, that ſhe wondered how it was poſſible Lord Baſil could be ſo very much deceived in his calculation; and effectually to convince him of his error, ſhe gave herſelf a legal right to the abundant riches of her own diſcoveries.

What a charming adventure was this for a girl of ſeventeen, preceded and followed by all its natural conſequences! An infant without a mother, trained up under governeſſes, who taught her, that to be a fine Lady, ſhe muſt alſo be a deſpot, and humbled their own necks, that ſhe might learn to trample over them, almoſt before ſhe

ſhe could walk without her leaders:—her head ſtuffed with romances, and her temper ſtubborn by indulgence. Theſe preceded her ſtolen nuptials; and of courſe there followed a flattering reception, a hearty reconciliation, ſome love, ſome diſputes, much repentance, and a great deal of miſery.

Settlements were propoſed by the father, but the lover was now a huſband, and it was his turn to refuſe. The Lady, who had learned a leſſon of ſubmiſſion in much leſs time than might have been expected, rallied on the ſide of her lord and maſter, —pleaded the diſintereſtedneſs of her affections;—what a ſtigma it would caſt on it to have a ſhadow of doubt paſs over the honour of her huſband;—ſhould not the man ſhe had entruſted with herſelf, have alſo the unbounded guardianſhip of her naſty dirty acres? Such arguments were unanſwerable; and, when enforced by tears and careſſes, who could withſtand them?—not her poor father, for he had

never any will but her own; and Mr. Pleydell was ſo well pleaſed with the ſucceſs of his inſtructions, that he did not inſiſt on her making any more ſacrifices for a long time, becauſe ſhe had given him this trifling ſpecimen of her obedience.

Lord Baſil lived ten years, and imagined (but it was a wrong idea) that he ſaw his daughter ſuperlatively happy, after her own way:—ſhe wiſhed to have her ſituation appear in this falſe light; it was the only recompence ſhe could make to him for her folly and diſobedience.

All this time ſhe had been ſtudying in the ſchool of contradiction under a moſt moroſe and ſevere maſter; ſhe had learned alſo a great deal of ſelf-knowledge, and how to gain a victory over the errors of education, from which all the bitters of her life had been extracted, but in which the heart was in no manner concerned.

The ſtudy was a hard one, and the pains ſhe took indefatigable, not only to learn her leſſon, but to conceal, under a ſmiling

ſmiling countenance, the harſh, unaffectionate, and intemperate language of her inſtructor, who never appeared before the fortunately hood-winked father in any other light than as being worthy of his tendereſt approbation. Beſides, two lives had now dropped between Mr. Pleydell and his honours;—the perſpective was more than viſible, even to Lord Baſil; he had now nothing to regret, but that his dear ſpoiled daughter had no progeny, to lead up through the avenue which terminated in ſo ancient a houſe, and a coronet ſo ſplendid.

His Lordſhip would, at this æra, have thought it the moſt unpardonable crime of which he could be guilty, had he made any independent proviſion for his daughter. What uſe could ſhe have for money, who had a huſband that adored her, and with whom ſhe muſt partake of a fortune more magnificent, and titles ſuperior to his own?

In

In this temper of mind he made his laſt will, adding to every thing which was her's by ſettlement, all his own perſonal and accumulated wealth, to the amount, in the whole, of two hundred and forty thouſand pounds. His daughter knew nothing of the diſpoſition he had made, until the will was opened, after his funeral: It was then time enough for her to be informed, that ſhe muſt ever live in a ſtate of ſervile dependence on a man who acknowledged no deity but avarice, and no conſideration for any body but himſelf.

The effects were all his own, and having taken poſſeſſion of them, this bleſſed couple retired into the country, not only to avoid unneceſſary obſervation, but unneceſſary expence; for that inſatiable thirſt of riches, by which he was ever purſued, the more it was fed, the more it required to be fed: and the ſuperfluities—almoſt the common neceſſaries of life, were ſacrificed to the account of accumulation.

His

His wife was not of the ſame ſentiments with himſelf; but we will ſay nothing of her diſappointments, or the vexations attending them. Cuſtom, it has been juſtly obſerved, is a ſort of ſecond nature, and the difficulties of her ſelf-choſen captivity, though not diminiſhed, were much more ſupportable at the diſtance of twenty years, than they had been at the cloſe of twelve months after her marriage.

The nineteenth year of her union, and the ninth of her impriſonment, produced two events that ſeemed to prognoſticate happier days: her family promiſed an increaſe, and her huſband ſucceeded to the long-expected title, together with an eſtate ſtill more valuable, in his eſtimation. All theſe agreeable circumſtances happening ſo near each other, ſeemed greatly to have changed his temper, and the wife was again conſidered as ſomething better than a mere upper ſervant.

He had often wiſhed for children, yet dreaded the expence of rearing them. She had

had frequently, after the firſt ten years, been in a ſimilar ſituation to that ſhe was in at preſent; and, during the firſt months of ſucceſs, his repinings were without number, and his fretfulneſs without end. Here am I, he would ſay, going to be burthened with a parcel of children, who may turn out, for any thing I know, a plague and torment to me: a certain expence they muſt be, and how am I to ſupport it? your father did not die half ſo rich as I expected he would have done, yet I dare ſay you would think yourſelf mighty ill uſed, if I did not keep you up like a lady of quality.

Something or other always happened to prevent the evil he dreaded; and then it was, by G—, madam, theſe repeated diſappointments muſt be owing to your negligence, or to the d——d ſtubbornneſs of your temper, and the pleaſure you take in making me miſerable.

He became an Earl;—his wife was in the way of bringing an heir;—he once more

more aſſumed the language of affection, which, after the firſt ſix weeks of married felicity, he had uſed as cautiouſly as his purſe, except in the preſence of her father, ſince whoſe deceaſe it was laid by, and ſeemed totally forgotten.

But now the caſe was altered; and, as the poet elegantly expreſſes the idea, "he fears that the winds of heaven ſhall viſit her face too roughly," though ſtorms and time had left very little in that face worth preſerving.

Does ſhe walk round the ſhrubbery, he fancies her fatigued—flies himſelf to the houſe for ſervants and a chair, to aſſiſt in bringing her back;—ſhe is obliged to ſubmit, but bluſhes at her ſubmiſſion. He walks by her ſide—holds her hand in his, and puſhes away with his foot every looſe pebble that may entangle the ſteps of her bearers.

If ſhe ſits down on any but the eaſy ſeat he has appointed for her accommodation, he is in a paroxyſm of deſpair, and entreats,

treats, for the love of Heaven, ſhe will conſider her ſituation, if not for his ſake, yet for the ſake of that noble boy on which the inheritance of both their houſes ſo abſolutely depended.

A London reſidence was procured, and the moſt aſtoniſhing preparations made for the reception of the little magnificent ſtranger, about a month before it was expected he would make his debut. The Lady was conveyed to town by eaſy ſtages, and funeral paces, but in all the ſtate of a princeſs, and as many attendants as if ſhe had been the Grand Signior's favourite Sultana.

Alas! ſhe was ſtill a captive, and had only exchanged one priſon for another. She was neither to receive or pay viſits, and ſeldom to take a peep from her windows, under the apprehenſion ſome paſſing object of terror might alarm or afflict her.

The hour at length arrived, when, inſtead of the noble boy ſo anxiouſly looked for, a lovely female child brought his excuſe, ſo much

much to the mortification of her father, that the firſt time he ſaw her was by chance, and not till ſhe had been nurſed at my boſom three months:—for do you not conceive, madam, I have all this time been talking of Lord Auberry and myſelf; and that this ſweet meſſenger of conſolation, at leaſt to her mother, was no other than that dear Mary, on whom, at our return to Riverſdale, you performed the offices of a little nurſe, though only eight years older than herſelf; on whom you afterwards beſtowed that tender friendſhip which has not ceaſed with her exiſtence, but is eminently diſtinguiſhed in your goodneſs to her orphan daughter?

Lord Auberry, from the time of his fatal diſappointment, imbibed a ſtrong diſlike to his home: we continued in town ſix months, but ſeldom met. Happineſs and I were but newly acquainted; her habitation was in the nurſery of my infant, and I never ſought for her in any other place. Often I endeavoured to entice my Lord to partake

partake of my inexhauſtible entertainment, but he fled from my ſolicitations, declaring himſelf an enemy to children, 'till they knew how to return his notice with gratitude.

I now received my friends, went ſometimes to court, and, not to be quite unlike the reſt of the world, now and then ſhewed myſelf at ſuch places of public amuſement as were faſhionable forty years ago; but much the ſmalleſt portion of my time was allotted to theſe ſort of conceſſions. If the world is no better now than it was in my days, I am ſure Mary Montague will have no greater *penchant* for it than I had.

From the moſt indolent perſon in the world, Lord Auberry became a party man, and turned his attention to politics with ſo much avidity, that his health, his fortune, and his repoſe were not thought too ſerious a ſacrifice in the ſupport of his newly acquired principles.

As ſoon as he had given over all hopes of a ſon, to inherit his titles and poſſeſſions,

ſions, he began to enquire who it was that the laws had provided for his ſucceſſor; and finding it was a Mr. Pleydell, who had a ſeat in the houſe, but voted on the contrary ſide with himſelf, in the rage of party madneſs, he procured an interview with him, and offered him at once, if he would go over to his ſide, he would, (provided he had no male iſſue) bequeath him at his death all his property, except a proviſion of fifteen hundred a-year to his widow, and ten thouſand pounds to his daughter,—the firſt to revert to him on my death, as alſo the legacy to Lady Mary, if ſhe ſhould die unmarried, or without children.

Mr. Pleydell was not enough the hero of his former party to fight their cauſe any longer, at the expence of ſuch advantages as were now held up to him by his noble relation; he agreed without reſerve to the propoſal and required nothing on the part of the propoſer, but that the bargain ſhould be made ſecure to him and his heirs, before he would venture to break wth his col-

leagues, or relinquiſh thoſe advantages, of which he was very ſure, by means of his preſent connection.

The demand was ſo modeſt, and ſo moderate, that it was immediately complied with; and when this delectable deed was irrevocably completed, ſigned, ſealed, and delivered, I had then, and not till then, the honour of being received into the confidence of my Lord, who, coming to my apartment, ſaid, with an air of reproachful inſult, Since I can no longer depend on you, madam, for bringing me a ſon, I have taken care to provide myſelf with an heir; my honours and my eſtates ſhall never be ſeparated; I have this day ſo ſtrongly united them, that unleſs you bring me a boy, or give me the opportunity of being the father of one by another wife, my preſent engagements to Mr. Pleydell are indiſſoluble. However, I have taken care of you and your daughter.

He then mentioned in what manner, and left me abruptly: but on what conditions he

he had made this ſacrifice of his moſt ſacred duties, he did not inform me; it was by accident I afterwards underſtood the nature of them.

I could have wept, exclaimed, wrung my hands, and tore my hair; but I have never comprehended that any conſolation is to be derived from the efforts of violence; I therefore conſidered that my life was now of greater importance than ever, to the intereſt and happineſs of my injured infant; that if I ſuffered any ſort of agitation to prey on my ſpirits, and undermine my health, I ſhould become acceſſary to the cruelty of her fate. A few drops of ſilent torture fell on the beautiful face of that dear child, as I preſſed her to my boſom, but her ſmiles ſoon diſperſed them; and when I met Lord Auberry again, he ſeemed aſtoniſhed at my compoſure; but his ſurpriſe was unmixed with approbation, for I heard him mutter to himſelf,—This is all hypocriſy, or d——d inſenſibility; confound them both.

As long as we remained in London, which was till the prorogation of parliament, we ſeldom ſaw each other in the day, and often he would paſs night after night from his family, without thinking it at all neceſſary to give me reaſons for his abſence; nor indeed did I require that he ſhould; for in truth, I could not have rejoiced if my upbraidings, or any other cauſe, had procured me more of his engaging company than in his own bounty he was inclined to beſtow upon me.

This was my laſt excurſion to town, except on the preſentation of my daughter, which was only two months before ſhe came of age; but my Lord never failed of ſpending the whole ſitting of parliament there without me, and without ſo much as once aſking me to go with him.

The bud of reaſon began at a very early ſeaſon to expand itſelf in the mind of my Mary; and I think you will allow with me, that at the age of twelve, when you married Mr. Petworth, and went abroad with him,

him, ſhe had no rival, either in beauty, underſtanding, or ſweetneſs of temper.

I never complained of Lord Auberry's injuſtice to herſelf, or his neglect of me; and the tenderneſs with which ſhe was attached to him ſeemed, at certain moments, to affect him with remorſe for the robbery he had committed on that property which was indiſputably her right, as the natural heireſs both of her father and my own: but though he could not prevent himſelf being pleaſed with, and returning her innocent careſſes, yet he was too proud ever to acknowledge he had done her an injury; on the contrary, though he knew the very name of his appointed heir could not but be diſguſtful to my ear, he not only ſpoke of him eternally, but he alſo brought him twice to Riverſdale, where I was obliged to receive and entertain him.

Mary was three years old when he made me his firſt unwelcome viſit; her father had been abſent ſix months; I told her, as ſhe ſat at my feet dreſſing her doll, that

her papa was coming, but when he entered my dreſſing-room, followed by Mr. Pleydell, ſhe had forgot his perſon, and running up to the enemy of her intereſt, ſhe claſped his knees with ſo much grace and affection, that I never can forget the lovely action, much leſs the death-wounding words that attended it.—Dear papa, cried the charmer, have you brought me a fine new doll? what a good papa you are, to take care of all Mary's money!

It had been her cuſtom, before he went to London, to bring her father all the ſixpences which were his own gifts, when in better humour than common, back to him, and on his going the laſt time from Riverſdale, he had promiſed to lay them out in a doll; this promiſe was ſtill remembered, but the application ſhe made to Mr. Pleydell, inſtead of her father, covered me with confuſion.

Were not her expreſſions almoſt prophetical?—I thought ſo, and ſnatched her away, as he was ſtooping to careſs her,

her, as if his touch had been infectious; nor would I again bring her from the nurſery, during ten days that this inſidious robber continued the gueſt of Lord Auberry.

It was, as nearly as I can recollect, within a very ſhort ſpace of time after I had the misfortune to regret the removal of your family from my neighbourhood, that Lord Auberry informed me he had prevailed on two Ladies of his acquaintance to make me a viſit, extolling them to the ſkies, and aſſuring me, how much I ſhould be pleaſed with their ſociety.

Remonſtrances would have been in vain, had I heen inclined to remonſtrate. I could form no very flattering idea of my intended gueſts; for ſurely women of delicacy would not have been ſo eaſily prevailed on to viſit Lord Auberry, with whoſe wife they were totally unacquainted. However, they were his friends, and with the hope, that during their reſidence at Riverſdale, I ſhould at leaſt ſee him in

good humour, I made no objections. On the contrary, I received them, when they did come, as if I ſaw them on my own invitation. Their intentions, I had no doubt, were correct, and it was only that they ſhewed too little regard to the laws of decorum for which I condemn'd them. How was it poſſible to ſuppoſe, that a mother would accompany her daughter on a ſcheme of proſtitution?

The name by which theſe curious people were preſented to me was Lott. I muſt give you a ſketch of them in this part of my narrative.

Mrs. Lott appeared a handſome vulgar creature, on the ſhady ſide of forty—good features, brown complexion, dark eyes, and bold countenance; very fond of her daughter, very free with my Lord, and downright ſervile to my Ladyſhip.

Miſs greatly reſembled her mamma in every thing, except in the advantages, which were all her own, of youth, figure, and complexion. Her age was under twenty;

twenty; her perſon tall, ſlight, and not inelegant; her ſkin, originally dark, but ſo artfully covered with white and red, that it muſt have been a more ſkilful inſpectreſs than myſelf, that would not have ſuppoſed Nature had culled all the lillies and roſes from her own choice garden, to plant them on the cheeks of my rival. Yes,—it was too true, and I cannot conceal the humiliating circumſtance.

The affected reſerve of this girl's behaviour to Lord Auberry,---his total negligence of her,---and the undivided attention he beſtowed on her mother,—were truly ridiculous; yet I was fool enough to be blinded by the cobweb artifice, till accident revealed to me, that his Lordſhip had more taſte for youth and beauty than he was willing I ſhould diſcover. I neither congratulated nor upbraided him on making the diſcovery, but ſatisfied my ſcruples by merely hinting, that I ſhould not regret their removal from Riverſdale.

My Lord, who knew I was appriſed of what he wiſhed to conceal, and had a much deeper ſcheme in view than I was yet able to fathom, condeſcended to intreat that I would have patience with them a little longer, and, to attain the ends for which he laboured, flattered me by ſaying, that he never found out the deficiency of their education, till he had compared it with the refinements of my own, or he would not have forced them on my acquaintance.

Such unlooked-for conceſſions filled my head with I know not what of romantic expectations. He had violently torn from my heart the flowers of peace, confidence, and affection; but he had not been able to root out from it the ſtill flouriſhing wiſhes, nouriſhed there, for his reformation.

I chearfully conſented to his requeſt, but under a promiſe, that when this viſit was ended, he would never again ſubject me to a repetition of it.

After

After our converſation, I behaved with ſomething more than my accuſtomed civility to the pliant old harridan, and her mincing, liſping, languiſhing daughter. But there was ſo much gravity mixed with my condeſcenſion, and ſo many hints eſcaped me, that I had no power to ſuppreſs, that it did not require to have my abhorrence of them explained in plainer language, and which, I believe, they had juſt underſtanding enough to comprehend in the fullneſs of its extent; for whenever I opened my lips to ſpeak, it was evident they feared what I was going to ſay, by the looks they caſt on each other, and the confuſion that covered them.

All this time I have made no mention of Lady Mary, and I will tell you to what my ſilence has been owing: when informed that two Ladies intended to honour me with their company, whoſe names I had never heard, and whoſe characters, if not doubtful, were at leaſt open to the cenſure of too much freedom, I conſidered on

the impropriety of my daughter, now in her thirteenth year, mixing with people who came to me under no favourable auſpices, and of whom I knew no more than that they were the friends of Lord Auberry; and from theſe conſiderations it was, that before the appearance of my viſitants at Riverſdale, I contrived to ſend her out of the way, pretending ſhe wanted change of air, and did not permit her to return back until I had the good fortune to get rid of them.

During my very long and ſolitary ſeclu-ſion at Riverſdale, I had found much em-ployment, and no ſmall ſhare of amuſe-ment, in making ſuch additions to the natural beauty of the place itſelf, as my fancy dictated, or my finances would ad-mit. Amongſt all the little edifices ſcat-tered here and there through the pleaſure grounds, none of them had coſt me ſo much attention, ſo much expence, or re-paid me with ſo much gratification, as a ſmall octagon temple, erected in the park,

on the ſummit of a high and almoſt perpendicular aſcent, which commanded one of the moſt lovely, as well as the moſt extenſive proſpects in the univerſe. I dare ſay you remember this enchanting ſpot; but for fear you ſhould have forgotten how my little building was contrived, I muſt remind you of it, for I am going to repeat a converſation, curious enough, and which would never have reached my ear but for the oddity of its conſtruction.

Recollect, if you pleaſe, that after the walls were raiſed, I hung it round with a falſe lining of glazed canvaſs, ſo coloured as to repreſent ſtucco, on which I had myſelf painted various poetical deſcriptions and hiſtorical events; this hanging was ſo ordered, that though it ſeemed to adhere to the building, behind it was a gallery ſix feet deep, which contained ſhelves for receiving all ſorts of things that could be uſeful to me, when I choſe to read, write, work, or play, at the diſtance of half a mile from my own unpleaſant abode;

I would

I would have called it a paradiſe, if the perpetual diſcontent of my Adam had not cloathed it in terrors: here he could not purſue me, for I had ſo heinouſly offended him, by expending the monſtrous ſum of a hundred pounds in completing my deſign, that at the time he found himſelf obliged to diſcharge my debt, his fury ran ſo high, as to make me think I ſhould be driven from Riverſdale, and obliged to ſeek for ſhelter in my new-raiſed apartment; but though his paſſion leſſened by degrees, ſo great was his hatred to the poor inoffenſive object of my labour, that, far from taking the trouble to inſpect it, if he was walking that way, he would never turn his face towards the fatal ſpot of his wife's extravagance.

Here it was that I always held myſelf ſecure from interruption; and to this aſylum did I fly from affectation, vice, and hypocriſy, the morning after I had conſented to my huſband's intreaties that I would permit his abandoned aſſociates to

remain yet a little longer under the roof with me.

As I aſcended the flight of ſteps, I thought the ſound of more than one voice came from the interior part of the temple; the door was open; I looked in, but ſaw nobody; I ſtood ſtill—liſtened again and again—heard the ſame voices, which I could now diſtinguiſh to be thoſe of my huſband and his two modeſt companions. I had formed ſuſpicions, that the deteſtable old beldame, who paſſed for the girl's mother, was, in reality, no otherwiſe connected to her, but by the affinity of their vicious purſuits; and I formed them on the ſuppoſition that Nature never could have blotted a page of her work with infamy ſo complicated. This is the time, thought I, ſetting my foot gently on the laſt ſtep, that they might not hear my approach, this is the moment which will probably explain more of their myſterious hiſtory than I am yet acquainted with.

The

The firſt words I could diſtinguiſh, as I crept nearer that part of the canvaſs which concealed them from my ſight, the pannel being again cloſed through which they had entered, convinced me this was the firſt time my huſband had ever honoured my temple with his preſence; for he ſaid, I ſuppoſe in anſwer to ſome obſervation of theirs,—Yes, it is well enough, but has coſt me a d——'d ſum of money; I ſhall never pay any expence on her account without murmuring, except for her funeral—on that ſingle occaſion, Ladies, I would be generous to profuſion, would ſhe but ſoon put me to the trial—then my deareſt Nancy ſhould reign in her ſtead, by G—d.

Perhaps you expect that I gave a great ſcream, and fainted away, as it is the duty of all heroines to do, when they overhear any thing ſo much to their own diſadvantage,—but you are miſtaken: I was ſo much uſed to hear him wiſh for my death, that it affected me no more than if he had ſaid

ſaid to me good night, or good morrow. There was no breach in the converſation, though I have made one; I leave you to repair it, and deſire you will draw the old Lady's anſwer and my Lord's obſervation as cloſe together as poſſible.

I'm ſure your Lordſhip is purdigious obliging to my poor Nanny, and as you cannot marry her yourſelf, I hope the gentleman you intend for your ſucceſſor won't put off and put off his coming much longer, ſo that there might be any alteration in her ſhape before he ſets about gaining her affections.

Gain her affections! interrupted my pious Lord, in a voice of thunder, do you forget the ſtation of ſervitude from which I raiſed your daughter to the honours of my protection? do you forget the dunghill from which I picked you up, brought you into the world as people of faſhion and reputation, ſettled you in a ſplendid ſituation, got you viſited, and have even introduced you, under theſe borrowed advantages,

tages, into my own family and to the notice of Lady Auberry?—and yet, wretch as you are, you dare talk to me of another man's gaining the affections of your daughter—thoſe affections that are mine by purchaſe.

I heard them both fall at his feet—I heard them kiſs his hands: the old one whined—the young one ſobbed—and his own utterance was choaked with fury.

I was afraid this charming ſcene would end in fits, and that he might bring one or both the afflicted ſufferers nearer the door to give them air; I therefore went on the outſide, to avoid being ſurpriſed by their ſudden appearance; but in a few minutes harmony ſeemed reſtored, and I returned to my poſt juſt in time to hear the infamous proſtituter of her own child (for of her being the mother I could no longer entertain a doubt) ſay to my huſband:

O, no, my good Lord, I never meant no ſuch thing;—God forbid my Nanny ſhould

ſhould ever love any body but your Lordſhip. I have lived in great families enough not to know, at this time of day, that the greateſt Ladies in the land do not love the men they are forced to marry, and yet are thought never the worſe for that; and when your Lordſhip has made poor Nanny a great Lady, by giving her your own kinſman for a ſpouſe, ſhe may do as the reſt do, and no diſgrace to her any more than to them.

Theſe words opened to my view a conſpiracy quite new and entertaining; and the explanation which followed, on the part of Lord Auberry, when Miſs Nancy tenderly preſſed him not to give her to the arms of another, let me at once into the whole of their amiable manœuvres.

Nancy, replied my ſagacious Lord, by making you the wife of Pleydell, I do not reſign a tittle of my right in you; on the contrary, I expect from you, after I have eſtabliſhed your fortune, more love, obedience, and ſubmiſſion than ever.

But

But I had rather not marry at all, ſaid the artful whimpering little gipſey,—indeed, my dear, dear Lord, I had rather live with you, and wait for the death of Lady Auberry.

Then you might wait long enough for a huſband, child; nothing will ſwallow her up but an earthquake; I have been chizzling on her conſtitution thirty odd years, and d——n me if I might not have made as much impreſſion on a block of adamant.

I thought of my beloved, my defenceleſs Mary, and lifted up my grateful heart to That Power, who had enabled me to give him juſt cauſe for his philoſophical obſervation.

You hear what my good Lord ſays, Nanny, ſo don't be a fool; for my Lady is, to be ſure, as ſtout and hearty as you or I; and don't you take it into your head that her Ladyſhip will let you live with my Lord and her; I don't think my Lady likes us, though ſhe muſt ſuppoſe us, by my

my good Lord's bounty, as grand as herſelf; I ſees her look at us ſometimes till all the blood in my body gets into my face; and if ſhe don't like us now, what would ſhe ſay ſhould ſhe find that my Lord is in love with you?

She has found it out already, ſaid my affectionate huſband, and would have turned you both out of doors, if I had not flattered her vanity, and cringingly ſued for your detention a little longer; but the devil ſhould have fetched me before I would have ſubmitted to intreaties, if I had not juſt then received a letter from Pleydell, that I may poſitively expect him here to-morrow; the appearance of her protection will be uſeful in our plans, and faith I ſhould hardly know how to manage without it; for though he has but a few hundred pounds a-year, he may have his ſcruples as well as other men; and if he was to ſuſpect your real ſituation, he might rather remain as he is, than burthen himſelf with my miſtreſs, and father my infant.

I heard

I heard the whining infamous mother beginning to pour out praiſes and thankſgivings, when he put a ſtop to the foaming torrent of her gratitude, by bidding her be ſilent, and not to interrupt him till he had done ſpeaking.

When I firſt ſaw you, Nancy, in my way to the Bank, I believe it was ſomewhere about St. Paul's, I had been long in purſuit of a fine-looking girl, like yourſelf, to marry my heir, and be the mother of my ſon. I had hitherto met with nothing in that way, whoſe appearance pleaſed me ſo well as your's; it was fancy directed my choice—inclination was not concerned in the buſineſs. I followed you into a milliner's ſhop, and found out that your ſtation there was the ſlaviſh ſervitude of attending half a dozen brats, and on low wages.

I went home without ſpeaking to you, and before I ſent for you to wait on me, the ſcheme I had in meditation was half executed; for without education it was impoſſible I ſhould bring you into that ſort of life

life for which I intended you. I had procured your admiſſion at the moſt reſpectable boarding-ſchool in town, under the character of my ward, who, though a conſiderable fortune, had hitherto been debarred from receiving any advantages ſuperior to the loweſt rank of females, her father being ſo penurious, that, to the hour of his death, ſhe had no better employment than doing the menial work of his houſe.

This neceſſary ſtep being taken, I ordered your attendance on me at my own houſe, and rejoiced that your mother came with you, as our preliminaries were the ſooner ſettled.

Two years I ſupported her as a widow of faſhion, and ſaw her improve ſo well, under my private inſtructions, that except in the article of grammar, and other little incorrectneſs of ſpeech, ſhe has not been much inferior to thoſe circles where I preſented her.

Your

Your progreſs, my dear Nancy, in all the polite modes of the world, was ſtill more rapid; and at the period I mention, I received to my arms, not the ſervant of a little ſhop-keeper, but a complete fine lady, in the form of an angel; and I loved you with fervour, not only for your own ſake, but becauſe I had done even more than Nature;—ſhe had only given you charms, but I had poliſhed them.—My jealouſy was equal to my love, and every man that ſurveyed you was the object of my curſes.

Your mother obeyed the commands I gave her, and ſecluded you from all eyes but my own, except when I attended you to ſuch places and people as I choſe you ſhould viſit. But when you acquainted me with the event I have ſo anxiouſly expected, and the probability there is that you will bring me a ſon, who, by marrying you to Pleydell, will ſooner or later inherit my title and eſtates, under the deſcription of

of his natural heir—this intelligence has coſt me many ſtruggles; you know how they have ended, and that I bring you here that, when he firſt ſees you, it may be under the protection of my wife. The better to deceive him, I have made you a ward in Chancery, and given you a fortune of twenty thouſand pounds, which muſt, with all my other poſſeſſions, have been his own at my death, whether he had refuſed or accepted my recommendation. So you have nothing to do but improve the charms and good qualities I have aſcribed to you, and entangle him as faſt as you can; but as for your affections, you are to preſerve them for the father of your child. For, by Heaven, if you ever conſider Pleydell in any leſs diſguſting light than the man I have forced on your acceptance, I will blow you all to the devil, though a piſtol was to end my own exiſtence the next moment.

This tremendous threat, I ſuppoſe, had its due effect, but I did not remain a witneſs of the termination. I had already

heard enough to petrify me with amazement, and, ſtealing off unperceived, I left the villainous trio to purſue their further deliberations.

Can you conceive any ſituation more diſagreeable than that in which I found myſelf now plunged? On the one hand, conſcience told me I became the confederate of their crimes, and the abettor of their horrible machinations, by not endeavouring to fruſtrate them. On the other, I was huſhed by my reſentment to Mr. Pleydell, and the fear of a decided ſeparation from Lord Auberry, to the detriment of my poor Mary's better eſtabliſhment, not to interfere in the diabolical buſineſs, but to let them go on as they pleaſed.

I at laſt hit, as I ſuppoſed, on a mighty fortunate expedient to ſtop its progreſs, without endangering my own ſafety, or the intereſt of my daughter.

Finding it impoſſible to meet the two abandoned women at my own table without treating them as they deſerved, I ſent a meſ-

a meſſage to my Lord, begging he would diſpenſe with my appearance at dinner, as I found myſelf unwell, and could not entertain company that day, but ſhould be glad to ſee him in my dreſſing-room at his leiſure.

I aſked my woman, who went down with my requeſt, how the Ladies were amuſing themſelves, and what anſwer ſhe had brought me back? ſhe told me, the old Lady was reading, and the young one playing at cheſs with my Lord; that they all three ſeemed very much concerned at my indiſpoſition, and ſent up a great many kind wiſhes for my recovery;—Mrs. Lott obſerving to Martin, that ſhe believed there was not ſo delightful a Lady upon the face of the whole earth as my Ladyſhip. Martin added, that my Lord deſired his love to me, and would be ſure to pay me a viſit as ſoon as he had dined.

The interval between his ſending me the meſſage, and following it up with his preſence, I paſſed in fortifying my mind with

reſolution, my temper with compoſure,—in making pathetic ſpeeches, and in giving them all the force of energy; but, amongſt the reſt, I had forgot to ſtudy my own weakneſs, and, for want of knowing myſelf, had raiſed the heroiſm of my ſpirit on ſo feeble a foundation, that it all tumbled to the ground, the moment I ſaw him enter at the door of my apartment, and ſhut it after him.

He looked gay, happy, aſſured—I wept, trembled, and was near ſinking under the load of timidity that oppreſſed me.

Which, think you, had moſt the appearance of a culprit?—Oh! there is no doubt but all the world would have ſeen in me the guilty wife, in my Lord the innocent huſband.

However, this was but a momentary eclipſe of fortitude, and when the cloud of horror had paſſed over it, my faculties revived, and, as the light of recollection returned, I found myſelf equal to the combat I had myſelf challenged.

Having

Having anſwered his enquiries after my health, which were more diſtinguiſhed by the ridicule of his countenance than the tenderneſs of his expreſſions; and to which circumſtance, it is probable, I owed a conſiderable portion of my newly-aſſumed courage; and having alſo beſpoke his attention, with an air of ſolemnity that I ſaw affected him with ſurpriſe, I told him of the diſcovery I had made, and the great concern it had occaſioned me—beſeeching him, whether he meant to purſue or forego the intentions for which he brought the woman and her daughter to Riverſdale, he would no longer inſult me with their preſence, but remove them immediately, at leaſt from my ſight, that I might try, in their abſence, to forget their vices and their inſolence.

Inſtead of flying into a paſſion, which I expected he would have done, Lord Auberry was humming different tunes the whole time I had been ſpeaking; but at

length he interrupted me, ſtill preſerving the ſame air of coolneſs as before.

Pray, Lady Auberry, how much longer do you deſign to hold forth? I am d——'d tired already—and my fair friends will expect me below.

And can you really call theſe wretches your friends, my Lord?

Yes—and the very deareſt of my friends, my Lady—mimicking my tone and geſture.

You will, at leaſt, free me from their ſociety—you will not force your wife to aſſociate with proſtitutes, after the maſk is torn away that concealed the infamy of their conduct?

Faith, Madam, I have juſt now ſo little time to throw away in liſtening to the melody of your tuneful accents, or to make my reſponſes in form, that I ſhall draw them into as narrow a compaſs as will merely ſerve to open the eyes of your ſublime underſtanding, as to your own precarious

carious ſituation, and my unalterable determination.

If you are to ſpeak ſo deciſively, my Lord, be but as juſt as you are ſudden in your deciſion, and I ſhall have the leſs reaſon to complain of being ſo ſoon deprived of your company.

You condemn me without reaſon, my ſweet complaining dear.—I did not mean to withdraw myſelf from you, but to take you with me; but firſt we muſt ſettle our little matters, preparative to your appearing before my friends without diſguſting them.

No, Lord Auberry—though you murder me on the ſpot, I will not go down to them.

But hear me, before you reſolve—after that, I leave you the miſtreſs of your fate. Firſt, then, to give you a proof of my ſincerity, I confirm the truth of all the circumſtances that your helliſh curioſity made you miſtreſs of this morning; and, ſecondly, I eſtabliſh the fact, that my

lovely, tender, and amiable Nancy has long been, and ever ſhall be, the dear, the only object of my undivided fondneſs.

Are you a father? and have you made no reſerve of affection for your unoffending daughter?

Had I a thouſand daughters, and ten thouſand wives, and every one of them as charming as yourſelf, I would ſacrifice them all to my miſtreſs; and ſo far I hope to have made my ſentiments plain and comprehenſive to your Ladyſhip's capacity.

Words ſo cruel, I could only anſwer with my tears; and though it is near forty years ago that I ſhed theſe original drops, ſome copies of them have fallen on the paper, whilſt I am on this part of my narrative—yet, how different the expreſſion! thoſe were wrung from my heart, theſe only fall from my eyes.

Nothing is ſo unbecoming in your ſex, continued this tender huſband, for whom I had ſacrificed duty, diſcretion, fortune, every thing but reputation—nothing ſo great

great a deſtroyer of beauty, as ſullenneſs. I deſpair of ever ſeeing you look ſo pleaſed and ſo pleaſing as my Nancy; but I will try to lighten up your countenance, by throwing a little more ſpirit into your features, by giving you my commands in ſhort-hand, together with the pains and penalties of diſobedience. Firſt, then, you are not to interfere with the marriage between my heir and my miſtreſs, neither directly or indirectly. Secondly, you are to go down with me, and join my friends below—to exert yourſelf willingly, chearfully, and pleaſantly, for their amuſement—carefully to conceal the great depth of your knowledge in their affairs—by no dark looks to reproach them—and by no private ſteps to wound the delicacy of their apprehenſions. I ſhall alſo expect that you are not only particularly guarded againſt betraying me to Pleydell; but that, as long as I ſhall ſee it convenient to retain the party in my houſe, you ſhall behave to

them all as if they were the choſen friends of your own election.

And theſe are the conceſſions you expect from your wife—from the daughter of Lord Baſil?

They are, madam—and irrevocable as doomſday.

You drive me to extremeties, my Lord! I am not your ſlave, and will never bow my neck to the yoke of infamy, though the conſequence ſhould be our eternal ſeparation.

He made me no reply, but went out of the room—was abſent about ten minutes—and came back again, holding ſome folded papers in his hand.

The conſequence you were juſt now hinting, ſaid he, would not be very diſtreſſing, I believe, to either you or myſelf; but there are other conſequences attending our ſeparation, which, for want of proper information, you may not have duly conſidered—I am willing to lay them before

fore you, from the moſt diſintereſted motives. It is only your future happineſs I would have you conſult—my own is out of the queſtion, and can in no poſſible manner be affected by your Ladyſhip's determination.—You have a daughter, Lady Auberry!

And you, Lord Auberry, have a daughter!—would to GOD ſhe was as dear to you, as ſhe is to her ill-fated mother.

I am going to give you one proof that your wiſhes are unneceſſary, for when, by your refractory temper, the ſame roof cannot cover us both, and you condeſcend to ſeek another aſylum, my affection for Lady Mary will induce me to retain her for my conſolation. And I now ſwear, by Heaven and Earth, by every thing viſible and inviſible, the ſame moment that ſeparates Lord and Lady Auberry, ſeparates Lady Auberry and her daughter for ever!

Have you ſtill a greater misfortune in reſerve for me than this, my Lord?—name

it, to inſure your conqueſt! for you have yet pierced my heart only, but not ſhaken either its ſtrength or its rectitude!

Well, then, we will have one trial more. You ſee theſe papers in my hand—they are the ſettlements I made on you and Lady Mary, at the time I entered into treaty with Pleydell; you muſt ſubmit, or I cancel them, and leave you nothing but beggary and repentance!

You leave me more!—you ſtill leave me a treaſure, that is all my own! but which I would moſt willingly divide with your Lordſhip.

Dam——n! madam—come down from your ſtilts, and make yourſelf more comprehenſible.

I mean an approving conſcience, my Lord.

If that be all, we will find a way to accommodate the duties of obedience to your own romantic whims; for, if there be any foundation for your ſuperior virtues,

tues, you ſhould ſacrifice ſomething to the eſtabliſhment of the ſame principles in your daughter.

Ah! cried I, in a voice of agony, that I had been long trying to ſuppreſs, they are already eſtabliſhed—and I would ſacrifice more than life to their preſervation.

You know Miſs Lott, Madam, and may recollect ſhe has none of your ſtarch, prudiſh, antiquated notions. Perhaps you will not altogether approve that I ſhould take Lady Mary from a ſchool of puritaniſm, to place her in one of eaſe, good-humour, and liberality. You may not think, from the vanity you entertain of your own opinions, that Nancy Lott, when ſhe is Mrs. Pleydell, will be quite ſo good a tutoreſs for my daughter, as you would make.

O God! cried I—cruel as you are, you cannot intend it.

Lord Auberry aſſured me, ſuch were his intentions; and confirmed them with an oath,

oath, ſo binding, that I ſunk, ſenſeleſs, at his feet.

I have dwelt too long on the heroiſm of my defence—I ſhall be leſs minute in the repreſentation of my defeat—ſuffice it to own, that I was vanquiſhed; but let me add, it was not the blandiſhments of vice, or the terrors of fear, to which I ſubmitted. There was but one conſideration that he could have advanced with ſucceſs—that one he forced me to encounter. The innocence of my child at ſtake, I could diſtinguiſh no other object. I gazed on her danger—my ſtrength was turned into weakneſs—and all my powers of oppoſition revolted.

My Lord having brought me to the edge of the precipice, drew me back from it, with more gentleneſs than he ſuppoſed I had any right to expect; and, as a teſtimony of his approbation, that I had at laſt given up my will to his management, he voluntarily declared, he would endeavour

vour to ſave as much as he could from his preſent income, with a view to make the addition of another ten thouſand pounds to the ſame ſum which he had already ſettled on his daughter. But of all his flattering conceſſions, there were none that afforded me comfort, except the permiſſion he gave me to occupy my own apartment, unmoleſted, the remainder of that miſerable evening.

What followed might be eaſily imagined—I have not patience to deſcribe the particulars. Mr. Pleydell was true to his appointment; he came, he ſaw, he conquered—or, to make the compliment more applicable to the occaſion, I ſhould have ſaid, He came, he ſaw, and he was conquered.

I neither let down my ſex's character, or diſpleaſed my Lord, by ſupporting its dignity. I maintained my own conſequence, by a diſtant, cold civility—but ſtudiouſly avoided giving him offence; my looks were guarded by the moſt exact caution—

caution—my words meaſured by the rule of political prudence—and, though I did not give his guilty aſſociates any proofs of my friendſhip, he appeared ſatisfied, that I tried to conceal from them how much they were the objects of my deteſtation. In ten days after the arrival of the deſtined huſband, all preliminaries were agreed on; and at the end of a fortnight's ſevere penance, I had the felicity to ſee them depart, attended by Lord Auberry, to compleat thoſe arrangements in town, that were ſo curiouſly begun at Riverſdale. Their abſence reſtored my tranquillity—I immediately recalled my poor baniſhed Mary—and, in her embraces, almoſt forgot I had ever been unhappy.

The firſt intelligence I got of my late viſitors was conveyed to me through the channel of a morning paper, and in words which I am very ſure were of my Lord's own dictating. He ſeldom ſent me the papers; and I ſhould not have ſeen them now, but to give me another ſpecimen how

how very far he meant to carry the plans of deception he had ſo warmly adopted; I have cut out the paragraph, and have kept it every ſince; pray read it—I ſend it to you as no common production.

" The beautiful and accompliſhed Miſs Lott, who laſt week gave her hand at the altar to Mr. Pleydell, heir aparent to Lord Auberry, is, we underſtand, the ward of his Lordſhip; and has been long training by the Earl and Counteſs for her preſent ſituation. Her own fortune is twenty thouſand pounds; beſides which, her affectionate patroneſs has preſented her with jewels to a conſiderable amount; and the Earl compliments the young couple with a ſuperb ſervice of plate, to the amount of five thouſand pounds. We alſo hear, her Ladyſhip intended to have graced the nuptials with her preſence—but being prevented, by indiſpoſition, took a very tender leave of her engaging favourite at Riverſdale, a few days prior to their celebration,

at

at the town reſidence of the young lady's mother."

It was full eight months before I heard any more of my Lord, or his new connections; at the end of that time he returned to Riverſdale, more capricious, more fretful, more peremptory than ever. What freſh cauſe he had for this accumulation of chagrin I did not enquire; but it was very ſoon explained to me, by a letter I received from an old lady, my godmother, who never omitted, once a-year, to give me this token of her remembrance. Amongſt a great deal of other chit-chat, ſhe did not forget to tell me, Mrs. Pleydell was brought to-bed of a daughter, and, though born ſomething before its time, was likely to do very well. She expreſſed her ſorrow that it was not a ſon, on my Lord's account—and declared the general opinion of every body was, that the mortification he expreſſed on the occaſion, was nearly as great as it could have been, had

he

he expected an heir of my preſenting, and found himſelf diſappointed—for which generous diſpoſition his Lordſhip had gained much credit, ſhe ſaid; and every body hoped the next time he might be more fortunate.

I was reading this curious letter, and ſmiling to myſelf, when Lord Auberry, who I ſuppoſed was gone out to hunt, unexpectedly entered my dreſſing-room. I dreaded nothing ſo much as ever again returning to that ſubject which had once ſo bitterly diſtreſſed me; and would have concealed the good old woman's goſſipping epiſtle, if I could have done it—that was impracticable—he had ſeen it in my hand—and, what was more, he had ſeen me grinning, as he called it, over the contents. It muſt be of an extraordinary complexion, he ſaid, to bring a grin on my countenance. He ſnatched it from me—ran his eyes over it—then threw it into my lap, drew a chair cloſe to my ſide, and ſat himſelf down by me.

Well,

Well, madam, and ſo, I ſuppoſe, when you anſwer this infernal Jezabel, you will tell her all your own melancholy tale—rejoice at my diſappointment, and call it a judgment for my ſins.

Indeed, my Lord, I ſhall not—I wiſh to forget the one; and I ſincerely wiſh you to be ſorry for the other.

All in good time; but you muſt certainly tell her I am the father of that curſed ———

I laid my hand on his mouth—Stop, I cried—ſtop, for the love of Heaven, and do not curſe your own offspring.

I felt his lips preſs the hand I held over them;—Thank you, ſaid he—you have ſaved me from a crime that is unavailing to commit—I ought to have known curſes would not change the intruder's ſex, and have kept them for a better purpoſe; however, I will repay your generoſity, by this aſſurance, that I will never ſee the d——'d brat, or its infamous mother, again, as long as I live. Whether he kept or broke

broke his promiſe I am not able to tell you. Mrs. Pleydell bred every year; but all her children were girls, and died young, except the preſent Miſs Pleydell, to whom my huſband had a claim prior to that of her nominal father.

Lord Auberry, immerged in politics, and ſpending, as uſual, half his life in London, yet grew much fonder of Lady Mary; and every time he returned to Riverſdale, ſhe made a conſiderable advance in his good graces. When ſhe was ſeventeen, Mrs. Pleydell, ſuppoſed to be in a decline, was ſent to the South of France, by order of her phyſicians; and I muſt do my Lord the juſtice to ſay, that her departure did not ſeem in the leaſt to afflict him; though, two years after, when accounts were brought to him that a ſon and heir had made his appearance, for whom it was impoſſible he could imbibe any particular predilection, I thought he would have gone diſtracted. Mary's preſentation was put off for two winters, becauſe it

it took him up juſt ſo long to reconcile himſelf to an event the moſt natural in the world.

About this period, ſome letters from his party, complaining of Miniſters, and the length of time he had abſented himſelf from public buſineſs, awakened him from the lethargic indolence of a diſappointed mind; and he flew to town, leaving Lady Mary and myſelf to follow him, as ſoon as we could prepare ourſelves for the journey.

I here end the firſt part of my narrative. Martin has already led you through the melancholy labyrinth of my ſubſequent trials, which were all terminated five years after, in the death of Lord Auberry.

Theſe are events, from which my too-faithful memory ſeldom lifts the artificial veil of forgetfulneſs I have forced myſelf to throw over them.

ANNALS OF LOVE,

(NOT MODERN.)

PART THE SECOND.

A Lovely Rose there grew
Within my ſhady bowers,
Which ſip'd the morning dew,
Unrival'd queen of flowers.

It ſtole the bluſh of May,
Its cheek the theft diſclos'd;
Soft was its air, and gay,
Its aſpect all compos'd.

At ev'ning, noon, and morn,
I kiſs'd this darling flow'r;
This Rose without a thorn,
That hung upon my bow'r.

Its

Its maiden, modeſt hue,
So guarded, ſo retir'd,
No inſect round it drew,
But pureſt thoughts inſpir'd.

Its heart, a glowing gem,
No canker had aſſail'd,
Or prey'd upon its ſtem,
Or on its ſenſe prevail'd.

When heavily and ſlow
A pelting ſtorm goes by,
Its heart juſt feels the blow,
One tear eſcapes its eye:

Phœbus his beams diſcloſe,
Sunſhine again pervades
The boſom of my Rose,
And gilds my pleaſant ſhades.

I set out with this poetical flouriſh, to let you ſee, that though Apollo is a deity of infinite intrigue, he is no reſpecter of perſons, but eaſily intreated; and that a girl of eighteen has no greater chance for his favour than a widow of four-ſcore. It is a long road to Parnaſſus;—I therefore ſit

ſit down at the foot of the mount, to continue my little hiſtory.

An alluſion to the orphan ſweetneſs of my grand-daughter, when I celebrate the opening Roſe of my ſolitary bower, might, on my part, have been the production of vanity; but will you not allow that it alſo has its foundation in truth?—yes, you do allow it, and a ſtill greater ſimilitude in the new light I am now going to preſent her to you.

At the age of ſixteen, ſhe was in perſon, mind, refinement, ſenſibility, underſtanding, and ſteadineſs, what you now behold her two years in advance. She was moreover at that time my companion, my friend, and my counſellor—the director of my ſteps, the light of my eyes, and the ſupport of my weakneſs—an inexhauſtible bank of mental wealth, from which I drew large ſums of happineſs, without fear of having my drafts proteſted.

The fortune ſhe inherits from her grandfather, in right of her poor mother, is

twenty thouſand pounds; for when Lord Auberry accepted the propoſals of Colonel Montague, he kept his word, which he had given me, to double the ſettlement he firſt intended for Lady Mary; and not knowing the match had taken place, or that ſhe had left an infant behind her, my granddaughter's ſucceſſion to that part of his fortune cannot be diſputed. I believe I forgot to tell you, that when my Lord made this laſt arrangement, he complimented me with the optional choice of accepting a thouſand pounds for a houſe, or continuing at Riverſdale during my life; and I choſe the latter.

Her father's eſtates, which were fortunately entailed on his children, whether male or female, are her's alſo, as well by his will, made after the death of her mother, as by his family ſettlements. It is not a common thing to mention females under an act of entail—I therefore call this particular exception fortunate, becauſe ſhe would otherwiſe have been excluded from any

any benefit of her father's landed property. Six thouſand a-year would have reverted to another branch of the ſame houſe; and the perſona's, which do not exceed two thouſand pounds, had then been the whole of her paternal inheritance.

I ſet out with giving you this ſketch of her worldly affairs, that when you have united them with the charms of her perſon and the endowments of her mind, you may be as much puzzled as I am to find out for what cauſe ſhe has been ſubjected to the caprices of inſolence, to ſlights, to diſappointment, to neglect—treated like an inſignificant, and forſaken without ceremony.

Twenty-four hours after the deceaſe of my late Lord, amongſt other letters directed to him, I opened one from Mrs. Pleydell, who, I knew, had returned to England ſome years before, and that ſhe had left the body of her mother in France, covered with the unhallowed dirt of that country. She had not heard of my Lord's

illneſs—it was impoſſible that ſhe ſhould—the poor, miſerable man having only two ſhort days to prepare himſelf for an awful eternity! The fatal diſorder was an inflammation of the bowels, and attended with extreme torture.

You will be ſurpriſed to hear me ſay, that a letter from Mrs. Pleydell to Lord Auberry could afford me any ſatisfaction—yet it really was the caſe—becauſe it fully explained that their criminal connection ceaſed before ſhe croſſed over to the Continent, and had not re-commenced ſince her return to Britain; a circumſtance that, whilſt it leſſened the guilt of my huſband, added to my compoſure, and ſtrengthened my languid hopes for his future happineſs. Another event it alſo made known to me, with which my Lord had never acquainted me—it was, that Mr. Pleydell had been dead ſix months. I diſcovered likewiſe that my Lord was appointed ſole guardian to his ſon, then nine years old; and that he had already acted under the truſt, by fixing

fixing the boy at an academy, giving him a private governor, and by other arrangements, which evinced his acceptance of the office.

I ordered my ſteward to inform Mrs. Pleydell her letter had been received, and opened by me; and that he had my commands to announce to her the death of Lord Auberry.

Ah! my Lady, ſaid the honeſt man, looking me reſpectfully in the face, with a ſentiment of mingled grief and ſurpriſe, is it poſſible your Ladyſhip can have ſo much condeſcenſion for ———

Stop, Boden, cried I, ſeeing his attachment to me would lead him on to invectives, go and do as I bid you—Mrs. Pleydell is the widow of your late Lord's relation, and the mother of his heir; and I will have her treated with reſpect.

There are occaſions when one muſt ſpeak decidedly; and though it hurt me to prevent the poor man from ſaying what he had a mind to ſay, I ſhould have found it

more difficult to anſwer his importunities, had he proceeded further. He was the favourite ſervant of Lord Auberry, and, I have reaſon to believe, very much in his confidence; but he always declared to one of my women, whom he afterwards married, that he ſerved his Lord from duty, but his Lady from affection. He was a little Welſh boy, that I took out of a charity-ſchool; and the gratitude he felt for me, as his firſt patroneſs, pleaded his excuſe for diſputing my commands before he could bring himſelf to obey them.

By the oddeſt fatality in the world, it happened, that the very gentlemen I had requeſted to act with me in the management of my grand-daughter's fortune, were appointed by my huſband to perform the ſame office for his young ſucceſſor. By means of this whimſical ſort of connection between the guardians and the children, I often heard of Lord Auberry, in terms, ſuch as, had he been the ſon of any other mother, I might have liſtened

to

to with pleaſure, and even have favoured the alliance, which was ſometimes hinted at, both by Sir William Sage and Mr. Racklief, as ſuitable to the happineſs and intereſt of both their wards; but I would not hear them patiently on the ſubject, prejudiced as I was againſt his little Lordſhip, not only becauſe he was deſcended from Miſs Nancy Lott, but becauſe I regarded him as the uſurper of that fortune, which, by the laws of nature and nations, ſhould have been Mary's, in her own right. I would, for theſe reaſons, as ſeldom as poſſible, permit his name to be mentioned when ſhe was preſent, leſt the encomiums of his guardians might give her a deſire to ſee and be ſeen by a youth ſo handſome and ſo amiable as they deſcribed him to be.

I do not pretend to give you this inſtance as a proof of my judgment; but you will allow that it was a very ſtrong one of my determination, to keep them aſunder. My two good friends, waſted much ſound reaſoning to make me a con-

vert to their opinion; but finding me incorrigibly attached to my own, they at laſt deſiſted, and ſcarcely ſpoke of him again for many ſucceeding years.

Mary had nearly compleated ſixteen, when Sir William Sage made his laſt viſit to Riverſdale; his health was then in a very precarious ſtate; and he was but too true a prophet, in foretelling that it would be the laſt time he ſhould ever ſee me, for he died in leſs than five months after his return. His attachment to my granddaughter was more like that of a father than a guardian. I knew he had a nephew, who would alſo be his ſucceſſor; and that he had been long ſtudying at Geneva, to which place he was ſent when very young. Sir William now informed me, that he expected him home in a week or two; and if, added he, your Ladyſhip will have the goodneſs to ſign his paſſport to Riverſdale, a few happy hours with you and Miſs Montague will repay my poor boy for the many tedious ones he muſt

muſt probably ſacrifice to his old, infirm uncle. I aſſured him of a welcome reception; and that I would endeavour to detain his nephew with me as long as he could find amuſement, within or without doors, to keep him from breaking into open rebellion againſt my arbitrary government.

There was ſomething ſingular enough in the anſwer he made me; and I accounted for it, by ſuppoſing he wiſhed me to encourage an union between this young gentleman and my grand-daughter, to which, had I found him as worthy of her election perſonally and mentally, as he was by birth and fortune, Sir William muſt have known I could form no reaſonable objection.

I know, ſaid he, I am about to ſend Frank on a dangerous ſervice, where he is more likely to be covered with ſcars than crowned with laurels; I almoſt think it will be, what the ſoldiers call a forlorn hope; but the poſſibility of a victory is ſo glorious, that to give up the attempt,

however hazardous, would be the action of a coward. Forgive me, madam, continued he, though I may not be alive to intreat your pardon, at the time I moſt ſtand in need of it—forgive me, I ſay, if hereafter you diſcover ſomething like duplicity in my conduct, and find out, that in committing my boy to the honour of your protection, I have more in view than his preſent amuſement, or the tranſient felicity of a moment.

About a fortnight after, he wrote to me, and ſaid he had fortunately procured the ſeed of ſome extraordinary choice plants, from the Eaſt Indies, of which, knowing my fondneſs for exotics, he hoped I would do him the honour to accept; and give the meſſenger, who would in three days preſent them to me, ſome kind proofs of my benevolence.

I could be at no loſs to underſtand who was this meſſenger, ſo recommended to my gracious reception; and at the time appointed Mr. Sage arrived.

I had

I had favourable *preſentiments* of my intended viſitor, before I knew whether or not he deſerved my approbation; and I offered up many a ſilent wiſh, that the young people might happen to like each other, as the beſt poſſible means to prevent her ever becoming the daughter-in-law of Mrs. Pleydell, and the wife of Lord Auberry—an event which I conſidered might be brought about by the guardians, if I did not ſee her eſtabliſhment accompliſhed before I ſunk down into the laſt and kindeſt repoſe of nature.

I had pictured to myſelf, that in Sir William's nephew I ſhould not ſee a man remarkably handſome, becauſe the family countenance gave me no reaſon to expect any of that race could be an Adonis; but his eyes muſt be expreſſive, his teeth white, his perſon good, his manners graceful, and the *tout enſemble* irreſiſtible.

Had I held up my little portrait to the eyes of my grand-daughter, before we ſaw the original, ſhe would probably have

aughed at the idea, and told me the picture muſt have flattered any man entitled to wear the name of Sage; but had I ſhewn it after ſhe had ſeen him, I ſhould have given her reaſon to accuſe me of not doing him juſtice. I ſaw, with joy, that I had been a bad painter—a mere dauber; and that it was as improbable Mary ſhould refuſe him her eſteem, as I conſidered it impoſſible for him not to endeavour the obtaining it.

His firſt viſit was a ſhort one—he ſtaid only ten days; but he came again, again, and again—and each ſucceeding one was longer than the former. The event, ſo ardently deſired by Sir William and myſelf, had effectually taken place, yet we forbore to write on the ſubject to each other—neither had the young man's intentions proceeded to any direct declaration, either to Mary or to me. The adoration he paid to her was mingled with that ſort of fearful timidity, which, the very beſt caſuiſts will tell us, are the certain ſigns

of

of a reſpectful, tender, and enduring attachment.

But how could theſe wiſe philoſophers account for the ſame ſort of timidity to her grand-mother, who has nothing forbidding in her aſpect, who loved him, and whoſe hands were affectionately ſtretched towards him? Whenever he approached her, thoſe ſhrivelled hands he would hold to his lips, and preſs them between his own—all at once ſeem terror-ſtricken—gaze on me, rather as an awful judge, who was to pronounce his ſentence, than a fond parent, willing to connect his fate with the darling child of her ſolitary exiſtence. What the wiſdom of philoſophers might find difficult to explain, may be rendered intelligible, if you give yourſelf the trouble to proceed any further in the tale of an old woman.

Mr. Sage continued to come and go at his pleaſure, as if he had already been a part of my family. We always hailed his return, and lamented his departure.—

Mary

Mary liked his converſation, was pleaſed with his attentions, but, I am perſuaded, had never entertained a thought that ſhe was the magnet, whoſe attractions forced him to repeat his viſits ſo often. A week elapſed beyond the time he had limitted to ſpend at his uncle's; another went by, and he did not return; I was myſelf diſappointed and uneaſy—Mary ſtill more anxious.—I ſaid to her, What ails you, my dear? you look pale—you eat nothing—your ſpirits forſake you—I ſhall either have you ſick, or I muſt conſult a phyſician to prevent it.

Indeed I am quite well, ſhe replied; but I am very uneaſy about Mr. Sage—I am ſure ſome accident muſt have happened to him, for he told me, juſt before he left us the laſt time, that nothing but death

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She was prevented from ſaying more, by Mr. Sage, who came that moment into the room, and, by his dreſs, convinced us that it was death, though not to himſelf, that

that had occaſioned his abſence and our alarms.

I do not aſk you, ſaid I, why you have ſtaid ſo long away, or for my good old friend; if your mourning habit did not explain every thing, I might read our common misfortune ſtill plainer in your dejection, in the redneſs of your eyes, and the paleneſs of your altered complexion.

All, all is true, ſaid he; I come to bid you farewell—Sir William is dead, and I am ——— He could ſay no more—he threw himſelf on a chair, by the ſide of Mary, and ſobbed aloud.

He could not have made another ſo intereſting a claim on her affections, as by thus engaging her ſympathy; but he ſeemed almoſt inſenſible to the ſweet tones of her voice, though ſoothing, ſorrowful, and accompanied by tears.

This appeared a favourable moment for leaving them together; it was plain his diſtreſs did not merely ariſe from the death of his uncle, there muſt be ſome latent cauſe

cauſe for grief ſo extravagant; and ſhe was much more likely to be made the confidant of his ſecret if I retired, than if I continued with them.

I am going, ſaid I, to fetch a cordial for our patient,—do you, my love, in the mean time, ſay every thing you can to comfort and conſole him.

Amongſt a thouſand confuſed reaſons that crowded on my imagination for the wonderful depreſſion on the ſpirits of my young friend, one only I conſidered as admiſſible;—it was, that his uncle had diſappointed him of the fortune he expected, and that not finding himſelf any longer able to proſecute his alliance with my grand-daughter, he meant to go abroad; and perhaps, thought I, the life of this dear youth may eventually be the ſacrifice of an unfortunate attachment, if I do not ſtrive to prevent it.

With theſe ſentiments, I withdrew to a ſituation from whence I could hear whatever paſſed between them, without their ſuſpecting

ſuſpecting me to be a witneſs of their converſation. My determination was, that if I found Mary as ſenſible of his worth as I wiſhed her to be, and himſelf diſpoſſeſſed of his inheritance, ſtill to make him the object of my choice, her fortune being enough for both, and, by crowning their loves, to ſecure, not only my own approbation, but my own felicity.

The place ſo well adapted for my being an unobſerved ſpectator, was a light cloſet that joined my dreſſing-room, which little place, eleven years before, I had filled with all manner of play-things, to divert my beloved Mary Montague, ſo that at any time, if we happened to become troubleſome to each other, ſhe would go to her dolls; and I had the ſtill more rational amuſement of watching, through a glaſs fixed for the purpoſe, all the pretty manœuvres of my enchanting companion. Some children are infants longer than others: Mary was of the latter deſcription; and before ſhe

was

was quite eight years of age, we had converted our play-room into a library, where might have been found other books beſides Tom Thumb or Jack the Giant-killer.

Take that part of the dialogue which I heard diſtinctly from this little apartment; it may ſurpriſe, but will not fill you with one half of the aſtoniſhment which the relater of it experienced at the moment of detection.

Mary had been ſaying ſomething, but I came in too late to hear what it was; I gueſſed, from his anſwer, ſhe had been trying to conſole him.

Never, ſaid he, I never can be comforted.

Sir William then has deprived you of his whole fortune?

Ah, Miſs Montague! I had no right to expect it;—I am not the heir of Sir William.

Then I have been deceived in Sir William;—I thought him the beſt of human beings, and I have heard him often tell

Lady

Lady Auberry, he had no other heir than his nephew.

He has no other;—he was alſo the beſt, the kindeſt of friends; and yet he has impoſed on Lady Auberry, entangled me in a paſſion fatal to my peace, and left me a wretch without hope.

Is it poſſible you you can praiſe and diſpraiſe the ſame perſon; repreſent him as the deareſt of your friends, and the bittereſt of your enemies? I do not comprehend how this can be;—but why do you not adviſe with my grandmamma, and follow the counſel ſhe will give you.

Would to God, Miſs Montague, I was not what I am, or that you were the granddaughter of any other woman in the world than Lady Auberry.

I ſaw the dear child burſt into tears, and heard her ſay, as ſhe ſtarted from her ſeat, —We never meet again, Sir; it is you who have deceived us;—he who preſumes to treat the name of Lady Auberry with diſreſpect, has

has forfeited all pretenſions to the eſteem of Mary Montague.

But hear me, ſaid he, ſtopping her as ſhe moved towards the door, hear me declare, before you finally baniſh me your ſight, that there is not in the univerſe another woman for whom I feel ſuch ſentiments of filial love, as I feel for Lady Auberry.

She looked at him with an expeſſion of candour and doubt.—If you really did not intend to inſult me, ſaid ſhe, explain your motive for that horrible wiſh you juſt now ſuffered to eſcape you.

I ſhall do it, replied he, in accents of ſadneſs; but the moment I have done it I know my fate,—I am driven from Riverſdale, and ſee you no more.

Why ſuppoſe ſo dreadful a conſequence? it is only the concealment of errors that is reprehenſible,—a confeſſion of them is more generally the ſubject for reward than puniſhment.

She

She returned to her former place, ſat down, and ſeemed to expect the performance of his promiſe, whilſt he ſtood before her, with his eyes caſt on the ground and his arms folded.

I think, Miſs Montague, you muſt have heard that there is a man in the world who diſpoſſeſſes you of your natural rights of inheritance?

I ſuppoſe you mean the preſent Lord Auberry;—I have, no doubt, very often heard of him, but never any thing to his diſadvantage; on the contrary, I have been told by your uncle, that nobody can be more worthy, few ſo deſerving of eſteem; —he has never injured me, I hope he has not offended you,—if he ſhould have been ſo unfortunate, I am much inclined to become his advocate.

Generous!——he ſtopped—But theſe, I preſume, are not the ſentiments of Lady Auberry?

And why ſhould you preſume that theſe are not her ſentiments?—Upon my word, I do

I do not believe ſhe has any more reſentment towards him than I have. If my grand-father and his father entered into engagements that were offenſive to any body, could he help it, poor ſoul, who was not born at the time?

Has Lady Auberry ever, as a proof of her favor, permitted him to viſit at Riverſdale?

Oh, no! for I never heard he had done her the honour to ſolicit her acquaintance.

And yet he reveres the character of Lady Auberry, and loves, yet loves to diſtraction, the beautiful, the amiable Miſs Montague.

Well, I am glad, ſaid ſhe, you are able to jeſt again, though it is at my expence; but does this friend of yours go ſo much beyond love at firſt ſight, as to love without any ſight at all? for I declare to you, upon my honour, I never ſaw him in my life.

And yet I am ſo fully confirmed as to the truth of my aſſertion, that you muſt allow

allow me to plead his cauſe as if it were my own.

Any thing that will amuſe you is more agreeable to me than the dreadful melancholy that overwhelmed you a few moments ago. I am convinced you only meant to terrify me, and ſhall never again feel for your imaginary diſtreſſes, however well you may ſupport them.

Tears rolled down his face,—he threw himſelf on the next chair to her, and cried out, in a voice of ſuffocation,—Mary, divine Mary, I muſt leave you! though my own ſoul is not dearer to me than you are!

Good God! ſhe exclaimed, you are as pale as death, and as cold as ice! for he had caught her hands, and preſſed them between his own; this ſurely cannot be acting!

No, no! my miſery is no pretence! it is built on the ſolid baſis of reality! I am running headlong to my fate, and there is but one way to prevent my deſtruction!

One

One way, only one way?—and will not the friendſhip, the fortune of Lady Auberry conduct you to it? you do not know how dearly ſhe loves you, and how much ſhe would ſacrifice to your intereſt or happineſs.

Lady Auberry loves me!—but does not Miſs Montague hate me?

If hate and eſteem have exactly the ſame meaning, perhaps I do.

Would you, to ſave my life, go one ſtep further?

Yes, I would conſider you as my relation, as my brother, and ſay to you, if you wiſh me happy, be yourſelf ſo,—if you deſire I ſhould live, you muſt live alſo.

And would you, deareſt, moſt ingenuous of your ſex, would you be thus gracious, had I been ſoliciting your compaſſion for Lord Auberry?—The nephew of Sir William Sage is happily ignorant of your beauty, and your virtues; negative felicity may therefore be his portion,—but after

ſeeing,

ſeeing, knowing, adoring you, nothing but the poſſeſſion of your hand at the altar, can reſcue Auberry from the extreme of wretchedneſs;—ſee him at your feet, and if you can pity him, extend a finger of mercy, and ſave, oh! ſave him from perdition!

Had Mary hated the man who thus implored her compaſſion, actuated by the natural benevolence of her diſpoſition, ſhe would have extended her hand to raiſe him, but not with thoſe emotions of pleaſure which peeped timidly from her eyes, and lay concealed under the vivid bluſhes of modeſty, as ſhe held it out to Lord Auberry.

It is now time to tell you what were my thoughts, and what were my determinations, when this *ecclairciſſement* had fully taken place.

I had entertained ſuſpicions of the fact, before he actually declared himſelf to be Lord Auberry; they were awakened by his own confeſſions, and ſtrengthened by the re-

collection of Sir William's laſt words, when he ſaid to me, Forgive me hereafter, if you ſhould diſcover ſomething like duplicity in my conduct;—I was hurt by the impoſition, but could feel nothing like reſentment for the good man, who, from the beſt motives in the world, had impoſed on my credulity;—I loved Lord Auberry when I ſuppoſed him to be the nephew of my old friend, and for Mary's ſake, as well as his own, I wiſhed not to diſlike him as the ſon of my enemies;—to gain a conqueſt over my long eſtabliſhed prejudices, was no eaſy victory; but in the end it was completed, and that alliance which I could never approve, I reſolved never to obſtruct.

Satisfied with my new plan of accommodation, I attended with much complacency to the further progreſs of their converſation, which made me underſtand the whole of Sir William's manœuvering to defeat my caution, and eſtabliſh his own project.

Lord

Lord Auberry confeſſed that his guardian's conſtant praiſes of Miſs Montague firſt raiſed his curioſity to be himſelf the judge if ſhe deſerved them;—he often aſked why he was not permitted to pay his duty to the Dowager Counteſs, who had a right to expect all the attentions due from the ſon of the family, and the repreſentative of her huſband? to which he always received the ſame anſwer, that I had buried myſelf in retirement, and he muſt wait till his viſits would not be thought an intruſion; this paſſed very well whilſt he was a boy, but after he grew up to the age of eighteen, and Mary twelve, the evaſion loſt its force, and he preſſed for a more categorical explanation, when Sir William gave him all the ſatisfaction he required.

The family diſagreement, which ſeemed to oppoſe his entrance at Riverſdale, only whetted his deſires to be received and acknowledged by me; but finding it impoſſible to obtain a regular introduction, he formed various expedients to gain admittance;

mittance, which were regularly counteracted or fruſtrated by the vigilance of Sir William, whoſe ſcheme was not yet ripe for execution.

In the mean time, eulogiums on my beautiful grand-daughter were every hour ſounded in his ears, till his wiſhes to ſee her had acquired all the extravagance of paſſion; it was now that Sir William thought proper to indulge his pupil, and finiſh his grand plan of operations;—you know under what character he was ſent to me, and know how the artifice ſucceeded.

He owned that the death of his only friend had driven him to a ſtate of deſperation, being aſſured that no other influence would ever prevail over my prejudices.

And now, continued he, moſt lovely, and moſt beloved of your ſex, now that you have liſtened to me without abhorrence, complete my happineſs, by adding one further proof of generous confidence.

I never

I never promiſe any thing, ſaid ſhe, ſmiling, till I know what it is required of me to perform; beſides I will hear no more, unleſs Lady Auberry's commands are in uniſon with your ſubject.

Then, replied he, I am a thouſand times more miſerable than ever!—before I was unhappy without the torment of knowing a better fate; now you have lifted me from earth to Heaven by the ſweetneſs of your condeſcenſion, and by this unneceſſary reference to Lady Auberry, you again daſh me on the pointed rocks of inevitable deſtruction.

I do not underſtand this ſort of language, my Lord; it may be very fine; but if you mean by it to make me infringe on any of my duties, it will loſe its effect;—why do you call a reference to my grandmother unneceſſary? can you conceive me ſo unworthy even of your own eſteem, as to take any ſtep of conſequence without her approbation?

I conceive you only inferior to angels, replied he, in the moſt paſſionate tone, becauſe I know there muſt one day be a finite end to your exiſtence; I conceive you in all other reſpects perfectly divine, and I expect from you the compaſſion of a divinity; I expect that you will not force me to an expedient that muſt eventually produce my ruin; for I ſwear, by Heaven and earth, never to drag on my exiſtence, when I am no longer ſupported by the dear hope of calling you my own.

Perhaps, ſaid ſhe, in a ſoftened voice, I may have miſtaken your meaning; will you, my Lord, have the goodneſs to remove the error I have fallen into?

Alas! my deareſt Mary, you are in no error,—I revere, I love, with my whole ſoul I love Lady Auberry, yet I dare not abide by the conſequences of her juſt diſpleaſure, when told what impoſitions have been practiſed by the man who, of all others, is the moſt hateful to her imagination,

tion, and by whoſe family ſhe has been injured, highly injured; I dare not aſk a reward before I have thought how to deprecate her reſentment; it is impoſſible I ſhould riſk all my hopes on a chance ſo uncertain; let me be ſtill the nephew of Sir William Sage,—Lady Auberry might grant to him that conſent ſhe would certainly refuſe to me. By my late father's will, I am not of age till twenty-three,—I am not to form matrimonial connections till that period arrives. I am alſo, by the ſame authority, condemned to paſs the two laſt years of my minority on the continent; and what do I require of you, Miſs Montague, that militates againſt your duty to Lady Auberry? is there a crime in having thoſe doors open to Frank Sage, which would be barred to the entrance of Auberry?—is it criminal to ſolicit a promiſe from you, that I ſhall find you unmarried when the term of my baniſhment is expired? or——

Hold, my Lord, ſaid ſhe, with more firmneſs than languor in her voice, and more of reproach than compliance in her animated countenance,—I have given you a great deal of trouble, and that you may not carry on a chain of arguments, in order to convince me of what I now perfectly comprehend,—I will make my obſervations on them as briefly as the number of them will admit.—You love, you revere Lady Auberry, and you are not able to abide her diſpleaſure, when ſhe is told of the impoſition you are engaged in; if you loved Lady Auberry, whatever was dear to her would be held ſacred by you; if you revered her, the want of reſpect would not be the means of proving your veneration; and whilſt you condemn your own duplicity, ſo far from renouncing it, I am requeſted to become the partner of your artifice:—you ſay, Lady Auberry has been injured by your family, and appear to regret the injury; and yet, by endeavouring

to

to ſlacken the ties which bind me to that dear parent, you meditate a miſchief greater than any ſhe has yet to complain of. Indeed, my Lord, there is no ſophiſtry by which I can be perſuaded, that accepting your Lordſhip's propoſitions would not militate againſt my duty; therefore you muſt either permit me to preſent Lord Auberry to my grand-mother, or never again expect me to ſit down at the ſame table with an impoſtor.

Cruel, ſevere, yet ever amiable, ever charming girl! cried he; I am more the captive of your mind than the ſlave of your beauty;—bring me to the feet of Lady Auberry—I will die, or I will conquer.

There were two doors in the cloſet to which I had retired, and as he pronounced the laſt words, I entered from that which opened upon them.

No, ſaid I, you ſhall not die,—you have already conquered;—I have heard you both with aſtoniſhment,—I have pitied

Lord Auberry, but I have gloried in my grand-daughter.

Auberry dropped at my knees,—Mary flew to my arms,—what a ſcene was here! was I ſixty years younger, I would certainly endeavour to deſcribe it.

The title of my true hiſtory, Annals of Love, is it not a ſtriking one? I am a little vain of my own cleverneſs;—who could have choſe another more applicable, or more to the purpoſe? but you will not be a proper critic till you have made yourſelf miſtreſs of the *tout enſemble*.

Before Lord Auberry left England, he was almoſt reſident at Riverſdale; and, in any ſhort excurſion he was obliged to make from thence, the privilege I allowed him, of holding a literary correſpondence with Mary, afforded us perpetual entertainment. I had not granted him this indulgence without limitation, for I reſerved to myſelf the pleaſure of ſharing it with them; and ſurely no two young people ever wrote with

with ſuch energy, eaſe, and elegance as they did.

The confidence I repoſed in Lord Auberry had worn off all apprehenſions that he before experienced from my diſlike to his family; he treated me with the affection of a ſon, conſulted me on all his affairs, and my preſence lay no reſtaint on the progreſs of that paſſion, the conſtant expreſſion of which was not more fervent, more energetic, than it was delicate, intereſting, and honourable.

The parting of theſe amiable lovers afflicted me almoſt as much as it did themſelves; and whilſt from Mary's cheeks I wiped away the tears of ſeparation, they fell on my own in abundance.

Such was the Lord Auberry from whom we parted two years ago; but he loſt himſelf on the continent, and another returns in his ſtead,—a Lord Auberry who does not viſit us, who does not write to us, who does not enquire for us, in ſhort, who does

not know, or wiſh to know any thing about us.

Perhaps you expect that I am to tell you of ſome violent diſagreement which had preceded the total diſunion of lovers ſo attached to each other; I have no ſuch common event to relate,—my materials are of the marvellous kind. Whilſt I am putting them together, I am ſatisfied with the decrees of Providence, and do not repine that I am unable to penetrate into the myſtery of its diſpenſations.

The laſt letter Mary received, was from Milan; Lord Auberry had then been abſent ſix months,—it breathed the ſame tenderneſs, the ſame ardency of paſſion as uſual; yet there was a ſomething of conſtraint and confuſion in many paſſages, that did not eſcape my obſervation, though I made it in ſilence, becauſe I would not be the firſt to ſow the envenomed ſeeds of ſuſpicion in a boſom where tranquillity and confidence had taken up their abode.

Sixteen

Sixteen months elapſed, and no more letters from Lord Auberry!—Mary pined, ſhe grieved, ſhe was unhappy; I wrote to him once, twice, thrice, but received no anſwer; I hinted at the inconſtancy of the ſex, ſhe heard me with gentleneſs, ſhe tried to ſmile, but tears ruſhed to her eyes;—ſhe muſt have ſtronger proofs before ſhe could believe him unfaithful; ſickneſs, death, the loſs of letters might have occaſioned a ſilence, at preſent ſo unaccountable; would I have the goodneſs to wait the moment of conviction, before I condemned Lord Auberry of neglect or perfidy?

I aſk this favour of you, deareſt grandmamma, ſaid my precious child, in juſtice to Lord Auberry, as well as for the eſtabliſhment of my own peace; with your conſent I promiſed to be his wife, and if he is not unworthy, I have no right to withdraw my promiſe; was I to give him up on appearances only, it is poſſible my life might be embittered with repentance, for having injured him, who is more de-

ſerving of pity than condemnation; on the contrary, ſhould he be unfaithful, if he forſakes me, and his ſilence has its ſource in neglect, a ſhort time muſt diſcover his infidelity, and then you ſhall have no reaſon to complain, that in this interval of ſuſpenſe, I have omitted to learn a leſſon of reſignation, as well as another, perhaps more difficult, that of eradicating the faint impreſſions of a miſguided fancy.

Here was a wonderful thing indeed, that a venerable perſonage like me ſhould improve by leſſons of wiſdom from ſuch a half-blown Roſe as Mary Montague! I can only ſay with the poet,

"There is no wonder, or elſe all is wonder."

I ſaw her ſituation in a new light; I ſubmitted to her own plan, as wiſeſt, diſcreeteſt, beſt,—and waited with impatience Lord Auberry's return to Britain:—He has been returned eight weeks; I ſaw his arrival at that time in one of the public papers,

papers, and I read alſo that he was preſented to the King by the Marquis of Down.

Theſe circumſtances I concealed from Mary, and cut out the paragraph which mentioned his name. My reaſon for this caution you ſhall know by-and-by. I had not forgotten her juſt and delicate objections to a premature judgment;—I therefore determined, though my doubts were all at an end, that his faith or his infidelity ſhould be ſubſtantiated, before the painful ſubject was again renewed, for her abſolute deciſion.

Boden, the honeſt ſteward, who had married one of my women, lived only twelve miles from Riverſdale; I could place unlimited confidence in his diligence and ſecreſy; I ſent him a ſummons to attend me privately, and he obeyed it early the next morning; by the time he arrived I had prepared the following billet:

To

To Lord Auberry.

If Lord Auberry has any thing to plead in excuſe for a ſilence of eighteen months, or for the neglect with which he has treated ſeveral letters, written by the grandmother of Miſs Montague to his Lordſhip, the doors of her houſe are ſtill open to receive him; after he has reconciled her to the diſcrediting certain paſſed appearances, ſhe will once more preſent him to her grand-daughter, and give Lord Auberry an opportunity of announcing to her, that he is leſs criminal than unfortunate.

Boden, ſaid I, you muſt ſet off expreſs for London, and deliver this note into the hands of Lord Auberry—you will probably find him at his mother's houſe, in Hill-ſtreet; ſhe, I know, is at Bath; ſhould he be gone there, you muſt follow him—and

not

not come back till you bring me his anſwer. Obſerve his looks, as he opens and reads the note—remember to mark his countenance as much as his words when he ſpeaks to you—but, above all, do not attempt to gain admittance by ſending up your name—for if his Lordſhip knows it is a meſſenger from me, there are ten chances to one that he will not ſee you; ſay, only, that you have buſineſs of importance, which you can deliver to no one but himſelf.

Boden accepted the commiſſion, with all the ardour of a grateful ſervant, proud to be made of uſe to his benefactreſs, and executed it with ſo much zeal, that I had the pleaſure of ſeeing him return in four days, which was ſhorter by two, than, from the diſtance, I had any right to expect. I got him conveyed into my cloſet, unobſerved by Mary, who was walking in the garden, and eagerly aſked him, Where were the diſpatches he brought from Lord Auberry?

I have

I have none, my Lady.

Then you have not been able to find him?

Yes, my Lady, I have ſeen his Lordſhip; but he gave me only a verbal meſſage for your Ladyſhip—His compliments, was extremely glad to hear your Ladyſhip was well—that he was, at that time, a little engaged, but would have the honour to anſwer your Ladyſhip's letter ſome other opportunity.

Wretch! ſaid I, ſoftly, as I ſickened with indignation—unfeeling wretch! monſter of ingratitude! I then commanded Boden to given me a ſuccinct account of their interview.

It was about twelve at noon when I knocked at Mrs. Pleydell's door, in Hill-ſtreet; it was opened, after I had waited ten minutes, by a dirty looking houſe-maid, who grumbled a good deal at being diſturbed ſo early—and ſaid it was a ſhocking thing for ſervants to be called up at that time o'-day, who never went to bed till

till five or ſix in the morning. I did not think half-a-crown ill beſtowed, to ſtop her complaints, and to get out of her what information I could;—ſhe then aſked me very civilly down to the ſervants' room, where I found every thing in ſuch a ſtile of confuſion, that——your Ladyſhip will excuſe me for the liberty of making remarks in your preſence—that convinced me there muſt be rioting houſe-keeping, and a young houſe-keeper.

Go on, good Boden, ſaid I, your obſervations are ſo far from being offenſive, that you cannot be too minute, for the gratification of my curioſity.

I have next to inform your Ladyſhip, that I did not ſee man, woman, or child, cat or dog, from one end of the houſe to the other, except the young woman I followed to the ſteward's-room, who gave me to underſtand, every ſervant, but herſelf, was in bed and aſleep. I aſked if her Lady was in town? No, thank God, ſhe ſaid; but the young Lord was come from

from over the ſeas, and that was bad enough.

Oh! then Lord Auberry lives here, I ſuppoſe?

Why I don't know, Sir, what you would call living—I think the ſervants live here, as you may ſee by the glaſſes and bottles that I have not had time to put away yet; and, to be ſure, my Lord lives here too, after a manner—but not like a nobility-man, any more than I am like a nobility-woman;—once or twice a week he dines here, by chance, and has always mutton-chops, ſo that he helps us no more on in our board-wages than the bare walls; but then his own man and the butler give treats—and then, as I am the only woman ſervant in the houſe, and cook their victuals, I come in for my ſhare when they have done; but my Lord never ſends a ſcrap off upon his plate, I warrant you—for, if it be much, or if it be little, he eats it all up. William ſays, he does believe his Lordſhip knows no more what he is about, when he

is

is eating or drinking, than the man in the moon.

Shall I go on, my Lady? ſaid Boden—if I am too bold, and encroach on your Ladyſhip's patience or time, I can juſt repeat as much of her ſpeeches as concerns Lord Auberry, and leave out the reſt of her nonſenſe.

Shorten it then, ſaid I, beginning to tire of his deſcriptive talents, as much you can, without omitting any thing that relates to his Lordſhip.

I aſked what time her Lord would be ſtirring, as I had ſome buſineſs that required diſpatch, and I wiſhed to ſee him as ſoon as he could be ſpoke with. She informed me, Lord Auberry had not been at home for three nights—that he ſeldom ſlept in Hill-ſtreet, though they were forced to ſit up every night expecting him, till ſix, ſeven, and ſometimes eight o'clock in the morning.

I enquired where, and at what hour, I might

might be moſt likely to meet with his Lordſhip?

She ſaid, the young nobleman was ſo gay, there was no telling that, becauſe he gave his company to all the ladies in town, and ſome of them, by the talk of his own man, were married ladies—and very great ladies into the bargain; but that, if I would ſtop till two o'clock, his man might be able to tell me where his Lordſhip was to be heard of; and it would not be long that I ſhould have to wait, becauſe Mr. Handy was always up before any other ſervant in the houſe, except herſelf.

As I had no other method to gain the intelligence I wanted, I thought it beſt to ſtay till Mr. Handy made his appearance, by whom I was inſtructed, that if there was a neceſſity for my ſeeing his Lord, I muſt call, about four, at No. 50, Gerrard-ſtreet, Soho; he would try to get me a peep whilſt his Lordſhip was at breakfaſt.

He

He wanted much to know my name and my buſineſs—but I was guarded at all points, according to your Ladyſhip's directions; ſo, when he could get nothing out of me, he inſiſted on my telling him if it was good or bad news I brought his Lord; and on my ſaying, It was ſo good that I ſhould expect a handſome reward for bringing it—he ſaid, If I would let him go ſhares in the profit, he would take care and obtain my admiſſion. Having agreed to the propoſal, he went away to dreſs his Lord; and at four I followed to the houſe, where he had directed me.

I thought I heard Mary's voice under my window, ſpeaking to her little dog, and haſtened Boden to finiſh as faſt as he could, that I might not be ſurpriſed before he had done with his extraordinary relation; he therefore informed me, in few words, that being admitted to the preſence of Lord Auberry, he found his Lordſhip at breakfaſt with a very handſome young lady—that he ſtarted, coloured with

with confuſion, on ſeeming to recollect Boden to be one of my domeſtics, and trembled exceedingly when he broke the ſeal of my note. The lady laughed at him—and he believed ſhe was no better than ſhe ſhould be.

Make haſte, ſaid I, and once more repeat every word of his Lordſhip's very ſingular meſſage to me.

He put your Ladyſhip's letter into his pocket, and enquired how long it would be before I ſhould return to Riverſdale? I anſwered, Nothing detained me in town, but to receive his commands to your Ladyſhip. Very well, ſaid he—Give my compliments to Lady Auberry—tell her I am glad to hear ſhe is well—that I am a little engaged now, but will take ſome other opportunity to anſwer her letter.

I now heard my grand-daughter's foot on the ſtairs, and diſmiſſed Boden by the door at which he had entered.

When I related to her the ſtep I had taken, and the conſequences attending it,

I forbore

I forbore to ſay any thing of Lord Auberry's female companion; to cruſh every latent ſeed of preference that might have taken root in a heart, gentle, generous, ſuſceptible as Mary's—to ſmother a paſſion, ſo fatal to her repoſe, was neceſſary; but to have humbled the dignity of Nature's proudeſt gift—to have ſtabbed her delicacy, by ſaying, The wretch for whom you are forſaken is a proſtitute, would have been cruel. There was no need of any other voucher of his unworthineſs than the meſſage he had ſent to me; and the moment it was repeated to her, he loſt her confidence—his idea was diſcarded—doubt, hope, incertitude, all vaniſhed; her natural vivacity returned; and if ever ſhe had occaſion to mention Lord Auberry, his name cauſed her neither confuſion nor heſitation. The conqueſt ſhe thus gained over a firſt attachment, was not the work of reſentment, or the impulſe of a moment; but the effects of a cultivated underſtanding, and the victory of deliberation.

Having brought my tale to a concluſion, I ſhall end with one perſonal obſervation, That though I might have been gratified by a nearer alliance with Lord Auberry, I am more than gratified in having eſcaped any connexion with his family.

LETTER

LETTER XVIII.

Mrs. Oxburn, to Sir Aſhton Montague.

Jan. 29, 17—,

UPON my word, Montague, I am infinitely indebted to your freedom, for preſenting to me, and then leaving on my hands, ſuch a monſter of melancholy as Lord Auberry; I command you inſtantly to come here yourſelf and take care of him, or elſe let him go and worry you in the country, for poſitively his eccentricities are too many and too abſurd to entertain me any longer.

I can make him of no poſſible uſe to me; he will neither ride, walk, dance, or

ſhew his handſome perſon in any public place with me; it was but Tueſday after you was gone out of town, I told him, if he would not go to Lady Elderton's ball, I would never ſpeak to him more as long as I lived; but do you think he would go? not he indeed; and yet he had the effrontery to come in his old lounging way again the next morning, and looked ſo inimitably careleſs, that I might have forgiven him if he had taken the pains to aſk my pardon; inſtead of which he drew his chair quite before the fire, and reſting his dirty feet on my fine poliſhed fender, took no more notice of me than if I had been his grand-mother;—I believe he did not know that I was in the room, till I told him I hated whiſtling;—he has ſtill his amiable propenſities you may perceive, by his beginning to whiſtle before he began to ſpeak.

This is not all that I have to complain of: Beſides provoking me every moment, his fits of abſence have done me a great deal

deal of miſchief; he has broken more china than would fit out a ſhop, and ſpoiled more gowns than would ſerve an adventreſs for a voyage to the Eaſt-Indies;—at one of my *petit ſoupés* after the opera, which I always give when my tyrant is out of town, the careleſs wretch ſpilled a tumbler of water over a painted lawn that had coſt me fourteen guineas the day before; I reprimanded him, you may be ſure, and to make his peace, he followed it with a large glaſs of wine, which he ſaid would take away the ſtains;—I ſcreamed out, but it was too late,—Creature, what have you done? water leaves no ſtain, but if it did, who but yourſelf would ever have thought of getting it out with port wine?—he begged my pardon, and ſaid he thought the wine had been white.

What is the matter with this man? is he always mad, always intoxicated, or always love-lorn?—there are remedies for moſt diſeaſes,—the laſt is at leaſt curable,—it is a pity he ſhould be loſt for want of an

able phyſician;—if you would but once explain how, when, where, and for what he fell into this dolorous diſorder, I would ſet about conſidering his caſe, and treat it with ſo much ſkill, that I ſhall give you leave to call me a bungling quack, or force you to confeſs that I am a perfect miſtreſs in the ſcience of healing;—you know my terms,—no confidence, no cure.

Montague, you are the moſt incorrigible creature in the world;—did I not ſhew you, a little while ago, my poor hands and arms covered with blue and black ſpots, which my mercileſs tyrant had given me on your account; the wretch not bearing to ſee me commonly civil to any body but himſelf? and yet you have introduced to my particular notice this Lord Auberry, who is ſo much your ſuperior in every thing, that I expect my pinches, ſcratches, ſtripes, and lock-up hours will be doubled, in which caſe I ſhall hate you both.

My deary has ſeen your friend ſo ſeldom, from the circumſtance of his fortunate

detention

detention in the country, that I have hitherto eſcaped pretty well; but he has ſo many good-natured friends ready to tell him all my little innocent manœuverings in his abſence, that ſleeping or waking I am in terrors, and always ſee his inſignificant figure in threatening attitudes, or feel his malignant fingers pinching my poor fleſh off my bones.

Mighty comfortable my ſituation is, to be ſure, both foreign and domeſtic! My father, poor man, fretting himſelf to a pack-thread, ſometimes becauſe he thinks I am not good enough for my huſband, and ſometimes becauſe he thinks my huſband is not good enough for me. My mother, poſitive, talkative, a wit, and takes upon her to give me inſtructions of caution which I am not inclined to follow. As for my meek help-mate, I need not deſcribe him;—you know the brute.

Theſe are what you may call the bleſſings of my fire-ſide:—then for my worldly connexion,—old cats abuſe me, young

prudes ſhun me, girls who have no lovers envy me, girls who have lovers are afraid of me; ancient gentlemen ſquall with the cats, ſentimental gentlemen grin with the prudes, all fine men admire me at firſt ſight, adore me at the ſecond, are my ſlaves at the third, but after a three, or at moſt four months captivity, they throw off their chains with as little ceremony as they put them on;—aſk me for one inſtance, and I will give you a dozen.

To pleaſe my mother, I ſtill continue to dangle away ſome hours every day or every night in Groſvenor-ſquare.

Now, as I have not ſpared my own relations, you muſt allow me to abuſe yours:—I cannot bear that couſin of yours, that Miſs Montague, that Saint Mary, as I call her; what a pity it is ſhe ſhould have cut you out of your family eſtate! for my part, I doubt whether Colonel Montague is her father, or Lady Mary Pleydell her mother;—my mother knew the late Lord Auberry intimately, and ſaw him only a few weeks before

before he died, and he had never heard of any ſuch marriage, or any ſuch grand-child; I think it worth your while to make a few enquiries, and not to ſit down contented with a cock and bull ſtory told by the doating old dowager.—I ſhould like to ſee her humbled, I confeſs; not becauſe all the men are gone mad about her, but becauſe the impertinent minx has taken it into her head that I am not proper company to aſſociate with her purity. She has ſaid this in confidence to ſome of her friends, who, in confidence, have told me of it again; and if I am not even with her, it will be my misfortune, but it ſhall not be my fault; I would have her beware, for I can bring half the great world, in ſuch a cauſe, on my ſide of the queſtion, by a look, for they are quite as ſick of her airs as I am; as to the men, they are all a parcel of fools, or ſhe is a ſorcereſs, and has bewitched them, for, except Lord Auberry, there is not, I am convinced, another man who has beheld her with indifference;—even you

began to feel her ſpells, and it was to avoid them, I verily believe, that you hurried out of town in ſo unaccountable a manner, the morning after the Ducheſs of Cleveland's laſt aſſembly.

I will write no more:—I am out of patience, out of caſh, out of humour with every body, and with every thing, except Montague, my mirror, and myſelf.

CAROLINE OXBURN.

LETTER

LETTER XIX.

Lady Jane Petworth, to Lady Auberry.

Jan. 31, 17—

I HAD the honour to inform your Ladyſhip, by two or three ſhort lines, of my having received your charming letter, and ſtill more charming packet. I have, ſince that time, heard from my niece Beaulieu, who is tranſported with her ſituation at Riverſdale, and ſends me the moſt flattering accounts of your health as well as her own *.

I condole with you, my revered friend, on the loſs you have ſuſtained in your old

* Both theſe Letters are omitted.

faithful ſervant Martin; you muſt have been unprepared for a ſummons ſo ſudden, as it ſeldom happens that Death overtakes by ſurpriſe thoſe whom he has been for ſome time gradually purſuing; and as to the good creature herſelf, I have no doubt ſhe would rather, had it been in her own election, have died, as ſhe did, under your roof, than have been ſeparated from you, and, after lingering a victim of ſlow decay, to have yielded up a life dedicated to her venerable benefactreſs, far removed from the influence of that goodneſs to which ſhe has been many years indebted for happineſs uninterrupted.

Your dear Mary, I know, has written to you on the melancholy ſubject*. I could not ſtop her tears, when the intelligence reached her that this tender friend of her infancy was no more; but I changed the ſource of them, and drew freſh ſtreams from her dove-like eyes, by ſeizing on that

* Miſs Montague did write, but the Letter does not appear.

moment

moment to lift up the veil that hitherto obſcured from her ſight thoſe domeſtic miſfortunes which involved the fate of her parents, and which the magnanimity of your ſoul has ſupported with unprecedented fortitude.

Perhaps you will accuſe me of miſmanagement, in thinking this a proper time to put in execution the commiſſion you had charged me with; I have nothing to ſay in defence of my judgment, but a great deal on the ſcore of opinion; for, right or wrong, I have always adopted this ſyſtem of belief, that when a too feeling mind is already ſoftened by the impreſſion of ſadneſs, and there yet remain behind ſorrows untold, ſorrows which there is a neceſſity for diſcloſing, it is the beſt policy rather to give additional cauſe for preſent melancholy, than to wait till the ſpirits are again invigorated, and more ſuſceptible of adverſe attacks. To ſupport my theſis, I make this diſtinction, that in the firſt inſtance, the heart will bend,—in the ſecond,

it

it may break.—So far at leaſt my philoſophy ſucceeds, that I have no more tears to draw from the beautiful eyes of your Mary; and now what are we to expect for this enchanting child but peace, pleaſure, happineſs,—a path ſtrewed with flowers, and enlivened with uninterrupted ſunſhine?

I was actually in poſſeſſion of your Ladyſhip's commands to diſcloſe this painful ſecret three days before I could prevail on myſelf to diſcompoſe that ſweet ſerenity, which is the peculiar grace of Miſs Montague; but on the third morning, when I received a few lines from your Ladyſhip's chaplain, to ſignify the ſudden death of Mrs. Martin, and to requeſt I would break the ſad event to my dear young charge; I heſitated no longer, and diſpatched a note, requeſting her preſence in Bruton-ſtreet;—ſhe came in leſs than an hour.

That we might not be interrupted by the preſence of a third perſon, I ordered my carriage to be got ready, and deſired

Miſs

Miſs Forteſcue would go into the city and make ſome purchaſes for me, which I knew muſt detain her quite as long as it was neceſſary ſhe ſhould be abſent. But, in all my abundant caution, I forgot to be denied, which, on ſuch an occaſion as this, though militating againſt my uſual cuſtom, I certainly ſhould have done.

The conſequence of my negligence was, that in ten minutes after I had finiſhed all that I had to ſay, the door ſuddenly opened, and Mr. Lexington made his appearance.

Miſs Montague, whoſe eyes were ſtill overflowing, ſat with a handkerchief thrown over her face, but hearing the ſound of his voice, ſhe haſtily ſtarted up, and, to avoid obſervation, fled to my dreſſing-room, but not till he had caught a glance of her perſon, as well as of her diſtreſs.

He threw himſelf into a chair, and kept his eyes fixed on the door through which ſhe had gone out. I beg your pardon, ſaid he, I fear my viſit is unſeaſonable; I have driven away ſome lady, who perhaps had

had a prior demand to my own on your benevolent counſel, though nobody can ſtand more in need of it than I do.

Be not afraid then to conſult me, I replied; the friend you ſaw with me is ſo little ſelfiſh as to admit many ſharers with herſelf in my eſteem and confidence.

Is the face of your friend as beautiful as her figure?

I think ſo.

Her perſon ſtruck me as being very like Miſs Montague.

I ſmiled.

My God! I have not been miſtaken then; it is her, and ſhe is unhappy; have I not ſeen her in tears? do I not feel from ſympathy that ſhe is miſerable?

The ſympathy of young men is generally too petulant, too eaſily alarmed; it has, in this very inſtance, miſled you;—could you expect to find me apparently happy, if ſhe was miſerable?

Yet has ſhe not been weeping?—would ſhe ſee me?—did ſhe not fly from me?—

and

and has not the voice of her diſtreſs penetrated my ears, even after ſhe excluded me from her ſight? Oh! Lady Jane, in pity tell me, or I ſhall be deſtroyed by the violence of my own conjectures.

Your preſence, ſaid I, followed, though it did not interrupt, a very intereſting recital; her feelings are tender—it affected, perhaps afflicted her, and her ſpirits were before depreſſed—for I had been obliged to inform her, that a good woman, whom ſhe tenderly loved, has lately been carried off in an apoplexy; the accounts reached me only to-day, with a requeſt from Lady Auberry that I would break the melancholy event to her grand-daughter.

He liſtened, whilſt I was ſpeaking, with a devouring kind of attention; when, having heard me to an end, he fell into a momentary fit of conſideration, ſtarted on his feet, took a haſty ſtep acroſs the room, looked out of the window, and returned back again—I would ſpeak, ſaid he, but I fear

I fear the queſtion I ſhould aſk would diſpleaſe you.

My dear Henry, ſay what you pleaſe, you will not offend me; the privilege of a negative, ſhould it be inconvenient for me to anſwer your enquiries, is the only power I reſerve to myſelf.

That intereſting recital, Lady Jane—I am diſtracted—was not that intereſting recital, which ſo afflicts Miſs Montague, which makes her fly from Lexington, was not the ſubject of it Lord Auberry?

Confounded at the queſtion, I might have thought his ſenſes deranged, but for the communication your Ladyſhip had the goodneſs to make me; and that I had been alſo inſtructed by Miſs Montague herſelf with the circumſtance of that myſterious affair, ſome days before I received my intelligence from you.

I aſſured him the name of Lord Auberry had not paſſed either her lips or my own, in the converſation alluded to; and aſked

him

him how ſuch an idea could enter into his imagination?

He caught both my hands—and preſſing them, in a tranſport of joy, cried out, Thank you a thouſand, thouſand, ten thouſand times; I could bear the diſlocating tortures of the rack, rather than hear that Miſs Montague's tears fell for Auberry.

You ſurpriſe, but you do not anſwer me: Where did you pick up ſo whimſical a weapon to fight againſt your own peace with, as that Lord Auberry ſhould be of any conſequence whatever to Miſs Montague.

I did not pick it up, he replied—it was put into my hand by rumour, and pointed at my peace by credulity; the curſed report reached me many days ago, and gains ground every hour, that the beloved of my ſoul, the only object of my affections, has been engaged to Auberry; that he is capricious—but that ſhe ſtill retains for him that dear and tender preference which, if I fail to obtain in my own favour, her

image

image ſhall henceforth be placed at the door of my heart, to bar the entrance againſt her whole ſex. I ſwear, in the face of Heaven, and before you, that if I am not accepted by———

He would, no doubt, have added Miſs Montague, if Miſs Montague had not, at that very critical inſtant, come out of the apartment to which ſhe had retired.

The few minutes paſſed alone were not miſemployed—ſhe ſeemed to have conquered the violence of her grief; what traces remained on her countenance might more properly be called the calm characters of ſerious recollection, than the agitated expreſſions of affliction unſubdued.

I beg your pardon, ſaid ſhe, for running away when you came in, but Lady Jane knows I could not have ſtaid without making a fool of myſelf. Have you ſeen the Ducheſs this morning? It was ſo early when my dear maternal friend ſent for me, that her Grace was not awake at the time I left Groſvenor-ſquare.

I have

I have not ſeen her to-day, was all he ſaid with his tongue; but his eyes ſpoke much more—they talked away at a great rate, and threatened to tell all thoſe tender ſecrets, which, for both their ſakes, I have thought it proper he ſhould at preſent lock up in the receſſes of his own heart. Is it not wonderful, that a paſſion, ſo ardent as his, ſhould bear controul? Silence, in his ſituation, muſt be torture; he ſees her every hour; and every hour endears her to his affection. This perſevering ſilence is a ſtrong proof of his ſuperior underſtanding—a fool would not have ſubmitted to it on any terms.

I have nothing more to relate to your Ladyſhip in regard to this interview. The Ducheſs of Cleveland called to take her up in a few minutes after; ſhe joined us, and they went away together, eſcorted, I think I may ſay, by the now half-happy Lexington. May I not venture to ſuppoſe, he was leſs miſerable when relieved from

from his jealous apprehenſions, that her tears were ſhed for his rival; and half happy, at the leaſt calculation, when he muſt diſcover, that ſhe does not receive his reſpectful, tender, though ſilent, aſſiduities with indifference.

The very firſt opportunity that offers, and it muſt be when the Duke is alone, I will ſift him hard to find out who is this lady in the clouds, for whom his heir is intended. If our beloved Mary be the perſon, which, you know, I have for ſome time ſuſpected to be the caſe, I may have influence enough to prevail on his Grace to remove the embargo of ſilence that I have tyrannically impoſed on his nephew.

Is it owing to the vanity, or the indiſcretion of Lord Auberry, that an affair, which throws a ſhade, ſo dark, on his own conduct, is got abroad in the world? The next time I ſee Henry, I ſhall certainly aſk him, through what channel he got

his extraordinary intelligence? If it were poſſible to tell this tale to the diſadvantage of Miſs Montague, ſo, I believe in my conſcience, it would be told. Our variegated circles are formed of young and pretty women, who, I am perſuaded, will never be ſainted for the charity with which they repreſent the diſappointments of a female, more beautiful, and a thouſand times more admired than themſelves. Conſider me, deareſt Lady Auberry, as the adopted mother of your grand-daughter. Though I have no right to ſhare in the glory that will entirely reflect on yourſelf, for having faſhioned a mind, the purity of which has few models, yet, when I ſee her diſtinguiſhed by the univerſality of praiſe, I muſt indulge my proud heart in the exulting idea, that I am more intereſted in her being beloved, reſpected, and happy, than any other woman in the world, Lady Auberry excepted.

May your days be lengthened, and may you reap the fruits of your ſolicitude for this

this dear girl, by ſeeing her eſtabliſhed in all manner of felicity! This is the moſt ardent wiſh of

Your Ladyſhip's affectionately devoted,

J. PETWORTH.

LETTER

LETTER XX.

Miſs Pleydell, to Lord Auberry.

Bath, Feb. 2, 17—.

UPON my word, brother, you carry on your affairs with mighty reſerve; yet not ſo privately, but that we get an occaſional peep into them. My mother, enraged at the inconſiſtency of your conduct, is in eternal ill humour with every body about her. I beg you will come and make your own peace, that we may live on more decent terms, or, between you both, I ſhall be worried to death.

My mother, to be ſure, is enough to try the patience of Job; but you are a thouſand times more in fault, a thouſand times

more provoking—for ſhame, Auberry, for ſhame! we have undoubted information of all your retrograde motions. As to your French women, your gallantries with Lady ——, Mrs. Oxburn, or any other beautiful women who may attach themſelves to you, neither my mother or I can form any poſſible objection; but, after you had entirely, as we ſuppoſed, broke off the connexion, which made her ſo miſerable, and half killed me with vexation, to hear that you again ſeek all occaſions to throw yourſelf in the way of our mortal enemy, of running about in the ſuite of Miſs Montague, of feeding her vanity, increaſing her triumphs—theſe are ſerious complaints—ſuch a ſpecimen of unſteadineſs and of diſobedience cannot be received tamely. If the charge be untrue, you will certainly either come or write immediately, to confute it. My mother's bilious diſorder grows worſe and worſe; for my part, I am ſick of confinement and nurſing. If it be not ſoon over, one way or another, I

ſhall

ſhall certainly go to town, for a little relaxation—ſo pray, if you are not too grievouſly offended with my ſiſterly freedom, tell the ſervants to keep my apartment ready. If I did not believe there was ſome foundation for that vile report about Mary Montague, I would beg your pardon for my angry letter, and ſubſcribe myſelf

Your affectionate ſiſter,

AGNES PLEYDELL.

LETTER XXI.

Lady Auberry, to Miſs Montague.

Riverſdale, Feb. 3, 17—.

LATELY, my child, I have been ſending thee, through thee channel of kind Lady Jane, food only for melancholy; and ſhall I not try to make thee ſmile, when, with regret, I have been forced to make thee weep? You tell me your tears are dried up, your ſpirits returned, and that your health has not been affected—GOD be thanked! As a proof of your good ſpirits, let me ſoon have another lively journal; to convince me of your good health, tell me you can tire half-a-dozen partners at a ball.

You

You dance like a divinity—Yes, ſurely, that is the expreſſion; Miſs Beaulieu ſays you dance well—but like a divinity was not the phraſe of Miſs Beaulieu. Suppoſe I tell you, that your old grand-mother has received propoſals from three youthful candidates, for the honour of her election, would you believe it? Nothing is more true; they are all ſo powerful, ſo rich, ſo gallant, and ſo much in love, that, unable to decide on the merit of either, their pretenſions appearing equally founded, I referred them to you, Mary, becauſe I depend more on your judgment in theſe affairs than on my own.

It was ſo long ago I had occaſion to anſwer a tender *billet-deux*, that, for want of practice, I found myſelf rather puzzled about the matter; but Miſs Beaulieu coming to my aid, we laid our heads together, and, between us, produced ſomething, if not very flattering to the hopes of Lord Silveſter, Lord Selby, and Commoner Sir James Melvin, at leaſt not extremely cruel.

I thanked each of theſe lovers for the honour he had done me; and aſſured them, my hearty acceptance would be of him who ſhould come to me ſtrongly recommended by my grand-daughter, as I could make no choice without her entire approbation.

I trifle with you; but you will never trifle with the affections of any heart, that, in the ſmalleſt degree, depends on you for its happineſs. By this time, I ſuppoſe, theſe gentlemen know their fate from your own lips; whatever your deciſion ſhall be, I am ſatisfied, though they may probably repine and be diſſatisfied.

Ah! my deareſt, when I am called upon to render up the account of all my indiſcretions, that of making thee miſtreſs of thy choice and actions at ſeventeen, will not appear in the number of them. Were thy hairs as white as my own, and thy years as many, thou couldſt not be more the diſciple of wiſdom, or a better ſcholar in the ſchool of propriety.

The

The incomprehenſible Lord Auberry is leſs offenſive to me, than the idleneſs of his purſuits unavoidably makes him a diſgrace to that rank he holds in ſociety. I pity, but I do not hate him—on the contrary, ſhould I not acknowledge ſome obligation, when I feel that I am indebted to him for ſhewing me the whole extent of your virtues, and in a new point of view, which, I am perſuaded, no other man would have taken the pains to ſet before me at the ſame price? for who is there, but Lord Auberry, that would build up any woman's reputation at the expence of his own? This has Lord Auberry effectually done; he has added to your ſenſibility, to your feminine ſoftneſs, the ſecurity of a firm mind, and the grandeur of a deciſive principle. The ſeeds of theſe excellent advantages were inherent in thy gentle boſom; but never might I have ſeen them bloſſom in the froſt of diſappointment, and bear the fruit of philoſophy, had not Lord Auberry, like a diligent gardener, taken

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much pains to bring them forward at an early ſeaſon.

I am charmed with Miſs Beaulieu! I am delighted with the letters that have paſſed between you! I love all young people who are good; but the affection I feel for my own Mary is mixed with ſo large a portion of pride, reſulting from her conduct, that I am in danger of growing a very vain old woman! Nor is it probable I ſhall correct this ſentiment, as long as I can ſay to myſelf, Am I not the parent of Mary Montague? Yes, deareſt child, I am thy proud, thy exulting, thy happy grand-mother,

M. AUBERRY.

LETTER

LETTER XXII.

Lord Auberry, to Sir Aſhton Montague.

Feb. 5, 17—.

D——N it! I am drawn into a fine hobble—and you leave me in the midſt of it, to ſcramble out of it as well as I can. My original plan of proceeding would have been infinitely more to the purpoſe—aſs, blockhead that I am, for ſubmitting to the amendment of my own bill!

I was going the plain, beaten road of common ſenſe; but you have brought me into a wilderneſs, a labyrinth of perplexities. I charge thee, ſpin thy ſubtle brains to cobweb fineneſs, till thou haſt made a way for me to eſcape. I muſt rely on your in-

ventive talents, for my own are worn thread-bare.

It was not only my deſign to throw duſt in the eyes of Lady Auberry and her divine grand-daughter; I would have hoodwinked the whole race of man and woman-kind, thyſelf excepted, until I had worked through all obſtacles—until I could have fallen at the feet of my angel Mary, confeſſed my crimes, removed her doubts, and obtained her pardon.

I call this the beaten road of common ſenſe, from which I made but one deviation, when I ſpoke to her—when I told her, as ſhe ſtepped from the carriage, that there was a perſon who had claims on her heart, which he never would renounce; it was then I ſteered from the direct path—I ſaw Miſs Montague—I loſt ſight of reaſon—my paſſions took the lead, and they betrayed me.

My error laſted but a moment—Did I very much repent it? No. She once loved me, ſaid I; and now that I have given her

her reaſon to ſuppoſe ſhe is dearer to me than ever, who knows but, notwithſtanding appearances, ſhe will yet cheriſh me in her affections?

It was neceſſary I ſhould again purſue my old ſyſtem of indifference, of neglect—that, ſuppoſing my reform impoſſible, the caſe might be given over as hopeleſs; and that neither ſhe nor her friends would give themſelves the trouble to inſpect my actions, liſten to tales, make enquiries, or think any more about me—the greateſt bleſſing to be deſired, in the preſent untoward ſtate of affairs.

I invited Lady ——— to ride with me in Hyde-park, when I was ſure of meeting there the only divinity I worſhip. I made her keep near the driver, that ſhe might be ſeen by Miſs Montague; I even commanded her notice, by putting my hand to my hat as ſhe paſſed by in the Duke of Cleveland's carriage; and I did all this with a tortured ſoul, but, apparently, ſhewed as little feeling as a butcher evinces

when he knocks down the innocent lamb, whoſe eyes meet thoſe of his deſtroyer, fraught with all the pity-moving powers of perſuaſion.

I do not recapitulate my grand and maſterly generalſhip, when I ſeduced that villain Boden to carry back ſuch horrible accounts of my wickedneſs to Lady Auberry, all of my own creating. Why ſhould I repeat what you know already? but you know not the pangs of ſhame that one particular piece of treachery has coſt me. The meaneſt garb ſtratagem can put on is the corruption of inferiors, yet it is as neceſſary to the accompliſhment of a deep laid ſcheme as a firelock in the hand of a ſoldier on the field of battle.

Were we greater plotters than we are, I would not wiſh a more able aſſiſtant to aid our execution than that plauſible, inſinuating ſcoundrel. I have already found him uſeful in his profeſſion; and he may be made much more ſo, if, hereafter, we have occaſion for him.

I have

I have given you this ſketch of the train I was purſuing, when you over-ruled certain *pre-ſentiments* that ſhould not have been ſilenced by the rhetoric of arguments, which had more of flowers than ſalt in their compoſition. I was a fool to believe that every puppy who looked at my angel was to be kept at a diſtance, by your whiſpering in their ear that ſhe was engaged to Lord Auberry—I have hitherto eſcaped, ſkulking in the character of a liar; a vicious one was more eligible, and far more gentleman-like—yet you will drive me, by your unlucky council, to ſhelter myſelf at laſt under the meaneſt ſin in the infernal catalogue.

The report ſpreads, like fire amongſt thorns. If I do not put out the flame with more ſkill than you lighted it, my own fingers will be d——nably ſcorched—Are not my difficulties multiplied from one ſcore to one thouſand?

Montague, if thou art not callous to the voice of my complaints—if thou art capable

pable of feeling repentance, ſurely thou wilt feel it when I tell thee to what a ſtate thy unlucky council has reduced me, and that my feigned character of indifference is all blown to the Devil.

Thoſe who, in your great wiſdom, you conceived to be the moſt dangerous of my rivals, were, in my own opinion, the leaſt to be feared. You do not know that diſcernment, as well as refinement, dwells in the boſom of my Mary—mine ſhe ſhall be, though Heaven, Earth, Hell, and the Lawyers ſhould unite their forces againſt me.

The only man of whom I am really afraid is Lexington, and he you have not thought it worth while to put on his guard, becauſe you aſſure me of his indifference for Miſs Montague; and becauſe you know the Duke, from whoſe deciſion there is no appeal, had deſtined him for another lady, long before my Mary had ever been ſeen by any of the family—if ſo, what the Devil makes him rivet his eyes on her beautiful countenance,

countenance, as if he was either a painter or a lover?—this does not look much like indifference.

For ſuch miſtakes as theſe, if it be a miſtake, that this young man is engaged in another place, remember, Montague, you are anſwerable; for curſe me if I do not hold you accountable for any miſchief I may receive from that quarter.

When I conſider how my hands are tied up, and that, if I was to ſee her led to the altar, I dare not draw my ſword to lay the wretch, who would tear her from me, dead at my feet, but muſt hide my head behind fraud and ſubterfuge—when theſe reflections croſs me, it is then that remorſe for my paſt crimes againſt the beſt, the lovelieſt, the deareſt of her ſex, is leſs exquiſite than the horrors of anticipation.

Some d——'d tattling goſſips or other have been giving information to my mother of all my movements, and I am ſure ſhe begins to ſuſpect that I am playing a double

double game. Before I went abroad, ſhe oppoſed my engagements to Miſs Montague with as much violence, as if I had propoſed to connect myſelf with the loweſt order of females; and as long as I remained on the continent, her ſpies followed me every where.

When I returned, two months ago, ſhe was gone to Bath, in purſuit of health, attended by my crooked-minded ſiſter; I make no apology for the expreſſion;—does ſhe not hate my angel?

I ſtayed three days to fix the reſidence of my *chere ami* as far from my mother's as I conveniently could place her, taking up my own temporary abode in Hill-ſtreet, and then ſet out for Bath, where, the very morning after my arrival, I was thunder-ſtruck to hear all my ſecret tranſactions proclaimed on the houſe-top, and all my hidden works of darkneſs expoſed in the broad day of recapitulation.

Montague, I actually, at that moment, did accuſe thee of having betrayed me; for,

for, except thyſelf and one more, there is not another creature who could inform them of my real ſituation; and, with the moſt friendly intentions in the world of cutting thy throat, I aſked my mother and ſiſter, at the firſt interval of ſilence, whether their informer was not Sir Aſhton Montague? They made no ſcruple to clear my doubts, and, no matter how, but I traced out, almoſt to a certainty, through what channel their intelligence had flowed.

Their inveteracy is of ſo implacable a nature, and ſo pointedly directed againſt the object of my ſoul's adoption, that, being fully appriſed of my calamitous ſituation, my perilous entanglements, they would, had I not deceived them under the moſt ſolemn aſſeverations, that my former paſſion was entirely eradicated for the grand-daughter of Lady Auberry,—yes, they would, from mere malice, have opened the myſtery of wrongs unutterable, before I had been at liberty to form a plauſible, or even poſſible defence.

Such

Such a ſtep as this would have utterly undone me;—I made conceſſions the moſt abject; whether ſucceſsful or unſucceſsful, I ſwore to renounce all thoughts of Miſs Montague, which was the ultimatum of their demands; and, on thoſe terms, I received their voluntary offers of aſſiſtance, to extricate me out of my precious difficulties. Already they have been uſeful to me, particularly amongſt the lawyers. I ſent off as many papers as, I ſuppoſe, will coſt me five hundred pounds, by the laſt mail.

One half of my time is paſſed in Lincoln's-Inn, and other ſquares inhabitated by gentlemen of the long robe; the remaining moiety is employed in curſing my own villainy, in execrating people and arts, that make me exclaim with agony,

"Once I have ceas'd to love, and once to pleaſe."

If you find any thing objectionable in the ſubjects of my execrations, I would adviſe you to pocket the offence, for I am not

not inclined to bruſh it out with the ſpunge of apology. The man who is angry with himſelf can have no good humour to beſtow on his accomplices.

The peace I had patched up with my female relatives is broken by your wiſdom; for ſince the ſubject of my old attachment has been revived, they begin again to lord it over me. My inſolent ſiſter talks of coming to town; ſhe does not ſay on what errand, but I ſuſpect her diabolical intentions, and had but one way left to purchaſe their ſilence a little longer;—it is purchaſed at the expence of a very condeſcending anſwer to her impertinent letter,—a whole ſheet of paper filled with oaths that I never made, and vows that I ſhall never keep.—You have p'unged me into the mud of fallacy; there I am grounded, and there I muſt ſtick, until the laws of my country graciouſly ſet me afloat, when I ſhall have no ſcruples of conſcience to prevent me from ſhewing them how little the vouchers

vouchers of a lover are to be depended on.

Theſe domeſtic attacks, though bitter as gall, are leſs nauſeous than other fruits that I am likely to pull from your tree of knowledge; ſome of them have this very day been forced down my throat.

The devil choak the women, and fly away with the men! I am peſtered on all ſides, and tell ten thouſand lies in twenty-four hours. I have not patience to give thee the particulars now, thou ſhalt have them when we meet,—the ſooner the better.

The poet is a liar who ſays there is nothing makes ſuch ſtrong alliances as fear; —you and I are bound by a tye infinitely ſtronger; *we muſt not cut*, for I cannot do without thee.

Mrs. Oxburn (I thank you for my introduction) does not ſuit my taſte; ſhe is an eternal coquette, whoſe pleaſure is captivation, and whoſe pain is to ſee any woman

man more admired than herſelf. My blood boils when ſhe profanes with abuſe the name of Miſs Montgue.—God made Miſs Montague, body and ſoul; but what malignant fiend was it that moulded the ſoul of Mrs. Oxburn?—She likes me as little as I like her. At preſent her whole deſigns are againſt the heart of Lexington, and with all mine, I wiſh her ſucceſs.

The hint you gave, that you ſhould want to employ her as a tool of miſchief, has not been loſt upon me; ſhe is in poſſeſſion of my ſecret, but never will be of my full confidence; and remember, that it was at your inſtigation, I may ſay of your threats to leave me in the lurch, if ſhe was not made one of our aſſociates, that I have ſo far truſted her. Remember alſo, that you have guaranteed for her faithful ſervices.

Keep well with her, you ſay;—be it ſo;—the guilty, as well as the drowning wretch, will catch at ſhadows. I expect to be again ſhipwrecked, by taking you for my pilot;

pilot; however, you are at the helm, and I muſt ſteer by your directions. Miſs Montague is your precious freight;—embarked with her is all my ſtore of happineſs;—whilſt I am looking round for the land of liberty, take ſpecial care that you do not run her on the ſhoals of matrimony. I am apprehenſive of no danger but loſing her;—manage to avoid that rock, and I will forgive thee if thou ſhouldſt ſplit my little bark, the Hopeful, on any other,—yes, though it ſhould be daſhed to atoms, I will forgive thee.

My fortune, my life, my character, if I have any character left, uſe them all, ſacrifice them all to prevent me from beholding my firſt, my laſt, would I could ſay my only love, in the arms of any other huſband but the criminal, miſerable

AUBERRY.

EDITOR's

EDITOR's APOLOGY.

LIBERAL and candid, illiberal and uncandid readers, I preſent myſelf before you all, like Shakeſpere's chorus, to announce that, from the date of the laſt letter, there is a chaſm of twenty-three days in the correſpondence between thoſe perſonages who have the honour to form the *Dramatis Perſonæ* on my little theatre.

This apparent deficiency is not owing to the indolence of any party concerned, or to my own neglect, but to one of thoſe unlucky accidents which cannot be guarded againſt, becauſe they overtake us by ſurpriſe.

How this ſmall portion of manuſcript got out of my hands, it matters not; perhaps it was loſt, perhaps miſlaid; whether one or the other, my memory will ſo far repair the damage as to give the purport of the letters, though not the letters themſelves. It is my intention to extract from the whole, collectively, ſuch a plain but faithful account how affairs were ſituated, who and who were together, and what they were all about during the lapſe of twenty-three days, as may be better adapted to the purpoſe of information, than to ornament this little work with the flowers of eloquence.

Lord Auberry, in a ſtate hardly ſhort of diſtraction, was, ſoon after he ſent off his laſt letter, joined by his friend Montague, who had been on a private viſit to Mrs. and Miſs Pleydell at Bath. He ſignifies, when he writes to them on his arrival in town, that every thing goes on to their ſatisfaction, as well as to his own; that he is ſure Lord Auberry is ready to conſent to

any

any thing, if proper obſtacles are thrown in his way, and with ſuch he is determined to provide him.

He has alſo this expreſſion, which I perfectly remember:—"Lord Auberry's paſſion for Miſs Montague is of the ſame nature with quickſilver, which, though it runs into a thouſand directions, loſes nothing of its ſtrength, and muſt at laſt unite into one body, and return to its firſt channel, do what you will to ſeparate and diſperſe it."

There are alſo miſſing ſeveral letters to and from Riverſdale, the contents of which I recollect to be nothing more than what ſuch a young woman as Miſs Montague may be ſuppoſed to write to ſuch an old woman as Lady Auberry. Hearts that are in uniſon with theirs, will be able to ſupply the vacuum with all that is beautiful in the expreſſions of maternal love and filial tenderneſs; and as to any other deſcription of females, they will be better

ſatisfied with the outlines, than with the picture of theſe old-faſhioned virtues at full length; yet all may be inquiſitive to know if there were any little events ſcattered here and there, which are neceſſary to the hiſtory. Nothing very material, only the diſmiſſion of ſome other lovers beſides the three that are ſpoken of by Lady Auberry,—that Mr. Lexington ſeemed to gain more and more on her friendſhip—that ſhe appeared to have recovered from the melancholy occaſioned by the relation of her parents' misfortunes—that her tears had ceaſed to flow for them, as well as for the death of poor Martin, whom ſhe almoſt conſidered in the light of a parent, ſecond only to Lady Auberry herſelf. She had honoured her memory with a ſlight mourning, though the putting on black ribbands on ſuch an occaſion had drawn down no ſmall degree of reproof from the haughty Ducheſs of Cleveland, and her Grace's whole train of accommodating intimates.

Lady Elizabeth Jones was aſtoniſhed that young people ſhould pretend to decide for themſelves, when their ſuperiors, in every reſpect, were willing to give them inſtructions for their conduct. For her part, if ſhe was the Ducheſs of Cleveland, ſhe ſhould take the liberty of ſending Miſs Montague back to her toilet, to look for ornaments better becoming her ſituation.

Lady Francis Lexington drawled out, My dear child, how can you contend with her Grace?—Lord Francis and I love you as if we were your own father and mother; is it not true, Francy? (appealing to her Lord) and yet I dare ſay you would not go into mourning for us, if we were to die.

Well, to be ſure, that is charming, ſaid Mrs Tovee; and ſo, Miſs Montague, you are determined to put on mourning for your maid? Oh, charming, charming!—did ever any body hear, my Lady Ducheſs, any thing ſo ridiculous?

Miſs Montague, oppreſſed by the general attack, was going to retire, when her Grace, to the utter confuſion of her numerous ſupporters, called her back, and ſeeing her eyes filled with tears, bid her ſtay where ſhe was. There is no body, ſaid ſhe, taking her by the hand, but myſelf, who has a right to dictate in my family;—I am not diſpleaſed with your whim, as it proceeds from the goodneſs of your heart; and, though I was at firſt againſt it, I am now perfectly ſatisfied.

It is more than I am, muttered Lady Elizabeth.

I recollect no further particulars of this converſation, and ſhall not make it out by any additions of my own coining.

I wiſh I could have preſerved the letters which paſſed from Lady Jane Petworth to Lady Auberry, and alſo one or two written by the ſame kind friend of my heroine, to her niece Miſs Beaulieu: but, alas! how vain the wiſh! they are gone with the reſt, and I have only to recall as many of their

their contents as I am able, for the benefit of my obliging readers.

Lady Jane tells Lady Auberry, that ſhe has had a private audience of the Duke—I went, ſaid ſhe, when I knew your granddaughter would be gone to air with the Ducheſs, and that I ſhould find his Grace at home and alone. I met Henry Lexington going in as my carriage ſtopped at the door; I aſked him, when he had aſſiſted me to alight, if he meant to make a long viſit to his uncle that morning? he ſaid, No, he only intended to find out what road the ladies had taken, and to go after them as faſt as he could; his head ached—he wanted a gallop—but hated either to walk, dance, or ride, except he had ſomething in view better than mere bodily exerciſe.

Lady Jane told him ſhe knew they were gone to Richmond, and would not adviſe him to loſe time, or he might be too late to eſcort them back.

He

He examined me, continued Lady Jane, with a great deal of arch penetration, and then aſked what my buſineſs could poſſibly be with the Duke, when I was ſo well informed that neither the Ducheſs or Miſs Montague were at home? I told him, with a very ſerious countenance, that the occaſion of my viſit was to conſult his Grace on a family affair, as he was always ſo good as to indulge me with an interview, whenever I wanted his advice.

He ſhook my hand, as he bade me good bye, and ſaid, If you have a favourable moment, when you could juſt touch on the affairs of a deſpairing heart, *remember me.*

I nodded my approbation, and ſmiled my aſſent to the prayer of his petition—after which we ſeparated, he for his gallop to Richmond, I for the Duke's cloſet.

No debtor deſires that his creditor ſhould remember what he owes him; no lover deſires that his miſtreſs ſhould remember what *he* has forgotten; no fading beauty deſires

deſires to have it remembered that her charms were celebrated twenty years ago; no huſband deſires that his wife ſhould remember his gallantries, no wife deſires that her huſband ſhould remember her *petit amours;* no fine lady deſires that a rival's claim to homage ſhould be remembered; and no amazon, who throws her javelin in the park, deſires that the blow ſhould be remembered which is levelled at the victim of her envy.

Theſe are inſtances which ſhew that, in ſome caſes, a good memory is not deſirable—in how many more is it a peculiar advantage! a writer of hiſtory, as I am, could no more do without it, than a pilot without his compaſs, or a ſtateſman without his penſion. Here have I loſt a whole bundle of letters from my treaſure of manuſcript; and if it had not been for the bleſſing and GOD-ſend of a good memory, dear readers! I could never have told you, as I now mean to do, what paſſed between

between the Duke of Cleveland and Lady Jane Petworth, when they were cloſeted together. I read her ladyſhip's epiſtle ſo often, over and over, that, I am bold to ſay, I will relate the ſubſtance of it in her ladyſhip's own words.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

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